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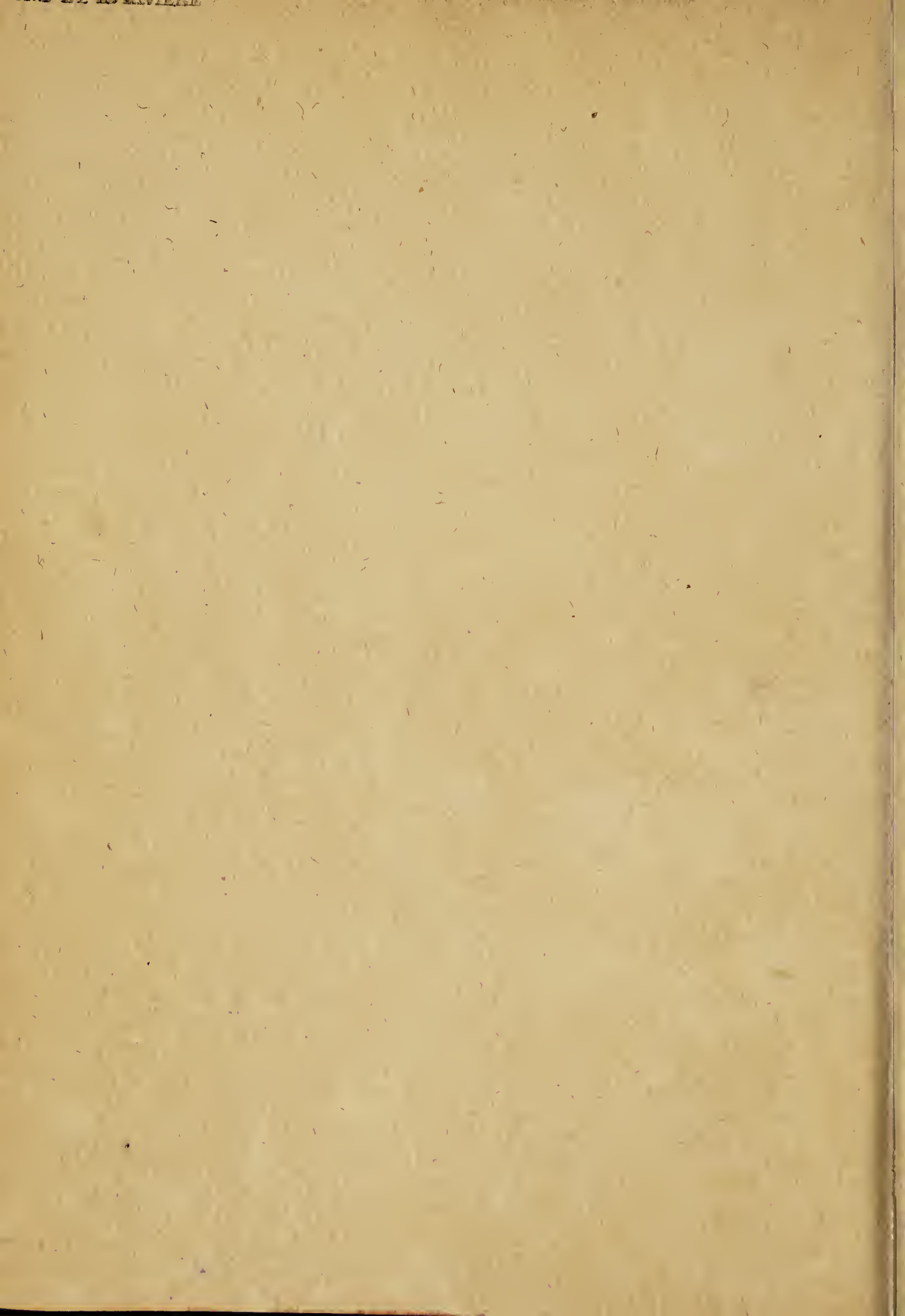


William Holgate.



















# THE TRAGEDY OF NERO,

*Newly Written.*

*(Opposed to an older on this subject.)*

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Imprinted at London by Augustine Mathewes,  
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# THE TRAGEDY

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# THE TRAGEDIE OF NERO.

*Actus Primus.*

*Enter Petronius, Arbyter, Antonius, Honeratus.*

*Petronius.*

**T**ush, take the wench  
I showed thee now, or else some other seeke;  
What? can your choler no way be allayed?  
But with Imperiall tytles?  
Will you more tytles vnto *Cesar* giue?

*Anto.* Great are thy fortunes *Nero*, great thy power,  
Thy Empyre lymited with natures bounds;  
Vpon thy ground, the Sunne doth set, and ryse;  
The day, and night are thine:  
Nor can the Planets, wander where they will:  
See that proud Earth, that feares not *Cesars* name.  
Yet nothing of all this, I enuy thee;  
But her, to whom the world, vnforst, obayes,  
Whose eyes more worth then all it looks vpon:  
In whom, all beautyes Nature hath enclosed,  
That through the wide Earth, or Heauen are dispos'd

*Petro.* Indeed she steales, and robs each part o'th world,  
With borrowed beauties to enflame thine eye;  
The Sea, to fetch her Pearle, is diu'd into:  
The Diamond rocks are cut, to make her shine:



*The Tragedie of Nero.*

To plume her pryde, the Birds doe naked sing  
When my Enanthe, in a homely gowne.

*Ant.* Homely I faith.

*Petro.* I, homely in her gowne,  
But looke vpon her face, and that's set out  
With no small grace, no vayled shadowes helpe;  
Foole; that hadst rather with false lights and darke  
Beguiled be, then see the ware thou buyest.

*Poppea* royally attended, and passe ouer the  
Stage, in State.

*Ant.* Great Queene, whom nature made to be her glory:  
Fortune got eies, and came to be thy seruant,  
Honour is proud to be thy tytle; Though  
Thy beauties doe draw vp my soule; yet still,  
So bright, so glorious is thy Maiestie,  
That it beates downe againe my clyming thoughts.

*Petro.* Why true;  
And other of thy blindnesse thou seest,  
Such one to loue thou dar'st not speake vnto.  
Giue me a wench, that will be easily had,  
Not wooed with cost; And, being sent for, comes,  
And when I haue her foulded in mine armes,  
Then *Cleopatra* she, or *Lucre* is:  
He giue her any tytle.

*Anto.* Yet not so much her greatnesse, and estate  
My hopes disharten, as her chastitie.

*Pet.* Chastitie, foole! a word not knowne in Courts:  
Well may it lodge in meane, and countrey homes,  
Where pouertie, and labour keeps them downe,  
Short sleepe, and hands made hard with *Thuscan* Woll.  
But neuer comes to great mens Pallaces,  
Where ease, and riches, stirring thoughts beget,  
Prouoking meates, and surfet wines Inflame:  
Where all there setting forth's but to be wooed,  
And wooed they would not be, but to be wonne.  
Will one man serue *Poppea*? Nay, thou shalt  
Make her, as soone, contented with an eye.

*Nimphi*



# The Tragedie of Nero.

*Nymphidius* to them.

*Nim.* Whilst *Nero*, in the streetes, his Pageants shewes,  
I, to his faire wiues chamber, sent for am.  
You gracious Starres, that smiled in my birth,  
And thou bright starre more powerfull then them all,  
Whose fauouring smyles haue made me what I am.  
Thou shalt my God, my Fate, and fortune bee. *Ex. Nim.*

*Ant.* How saulely yon fellow.

Enters the Empresse chamber.

*Pet.* I, and her too? *Antonius* knowest thou him?

*Ant.* What? knowes the onely favorite of the Court?  
Indeed, not many dayes agoe thou mightest,  
Haue not vnlawfully askt that question.

*Pet.* Why? Is he rais'd?

*Ant.* That haue I sought in him,  
But neuer peece of good desert could finde:  
Hee is *Nymphidias* sonne, the free'd woman,  
Which basenesse to shake off, he nothing hath  
But his owne pride.

*Pet.* You Remember, when *Gallus*, *Celsus*,  
And others too, though now forgotten, were  
Great in *Poppeas* eyes.

*Ant.* I doe, and did interpret it in them  
An honorable fauor, she bare vertue,  
On parts like vertue.

*Pet.* The cause is one of theirs, and this mans grace,  
I once was great in wauering smiles of Court,  
I fell because I knew: Sence haue I giuen  
My time to my owne pleasures, and would now  
Aduise thee too, to meane, and safe delights:  
The thigh's as soft the sheepes backe couereth  
As that which crimson, and with Gold adorn'd:  
Yet cause I see, that thy restrain'd desires,  
Cannot their owne way choose, come thou with me  
Perhapps He shew thee meanes of remedie.

*Exeunt*



# The Tragedie of Nero.

## Two Romans at severall doores.

1 Rom. Whither so fast man? whither so fast?

2 Rom. Whither? but where your eares doe lead you;  
To *Neros* Triumphs, and the shouts you heare.

1 Ro. Why? comes he crown'd with *Parthian* ouerthrow.  
And brings he *Vologasus* with him, chain'd?

2 Ro. *Parthian* ouerthrowne? why, he comes crown'd  
For victories which neuer Roman wonne;  
For hauing Greece in her owne arts ouerthrowne;  
In Singing, Dauncing, Horse-race, Stage-playing.  
Neuer, O Rome had neuer such a Prince.

1 Rom. Yet, I haue heard: our ancestors were crown'd  
For other Victories.

2 Rom. None of our ancestors, were ere like him. *Within*  
*Nero, Apollo, Nero, Hercules.*

1 Rom. Harke, how th'applauding shouts doe cleare th'ayre  
This Idle talke will make me loose the fight.

## Two Romans more to them.

3 Rom. Whither goe you? alls done i'th Capytall,  
And *Nero*, hauing there his tables hung,  
And Garlands vp: is to the Pallace gone.  
T'was beyond wonder; I shall neuer see,  
Nay, I neuer looke, to see the like againe  
Eightene hundred and eight Crownes  
For severall victories and the place set downe  
Where, and in what, and whom he ouercame.

4 Rom. That was set downe i'th tables, that were borne  
Vpon the Souldiers speares.

1 Rom. O made, and sometimes yse to other ends.

2 Rom. But did he winne them all with singing.

3 Rom. Faith all with singing, and with stage-playing.

1 Rom. So many Crownes got with a song.

4 Rom. But, did you marke the Greeke Musicians  
Behinde his Chariot, hanging downe their heads?

Sham'd,



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Shan'd, and orecome, in their professions,  
O *Rome* was neuer honour'd so, before.

3. *Rom.* But, what was he that rode 'ith' Chariot with him?

4. *Rom.* That was *Diodorus* the Mynstrill, that he fauours.

3. *Rom.* Was there euer such a Prince.

2. *Rom.* O *Nero Augustus*, the true *Augustus*.

3. *Rom.* Nay, had you seene him as he rode along,  
With an *Olympicke Crowne* vpon his head,  
And with a *Pithian* on his arme: you would haue thought,  
Looking on one, he had *Apollo* seem'd,  
On th' other *Hercules*.

2. *Rom.* I haue heard my father oft repeat the Triumphs,  
Which in *Augustus Casars* tymes were showne,  
Vpon his Victorie ore the *Ilirians*;  
But it seemes it was not like to this.

3, & 4. *Rom.* Pish, it could not be like this.

2, 3, & 4. O *Nero, Apollo, Nero, Hercules*.

*Exeunt. 2, 3, & 4. Rom.*

*Manet Primus.*

1. *Rom.* Whether *Augustus* Tryumph greater was  
I cannot tell; his Tryumphs cause I know  
Was greater farre, and farre more Honourable.  
What are wee People? or our flattering voyces,  
That alwayes shame, and foolish things applaud  
Hauing no sparke of Soule; All Eares, and eyes,  
Pleas'd with vaine showes, deluded by our senses  
Still enemies to wisdom, and to goodnesse.

*exit.*

*Nero, Poppea, Nymphidius, Tigellinus, Epaphroditus, Neophitus, and others.*

*Nero*, Now fayre *Poppea*, see thy *Nero* shine,  
In bright *Achaias* spoyle; and *Rome* in him.  
The *Capitall* hath other Trophies seene  
Then it was wont; Not spoyle with blood bedew'd,  
Or the vnhappie obsequies of Death:  
But such, as *Casars* cunning, not his force,  
Hath wrung from *Greece*; too bragging of her art.

*Tigell.* And in this strife, the glories all your owne,  
Your Tribunes cannot share this prayse with you;



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Here, your *Centurions* hath no part at all,  
Bootlesse your Armies, and your Eagles were ;  
No Nauies helpt, to bring away this conquest.

*Nim.* Euen Fortunes selfe, Fortune the Queene of kingdomes  
(That Warrs grim valour graceth with her deeds,)  
Will claime no portion in this Victorie.

*Nero.* Not *Bacchus*, drawne from Nisa downe with Tigers,  
Curbing with viny raines, their wilfull heads,  
Whil'st some doe gape vpon his Iuy Thirfe,  
Some, on the dangling grapes, that Crowne his head,  
All praise his beantie, and continuing youth :  
So strooke, amased India, with wonder  
As *Neroes* glories did the Greekish townes  
*Elis*, and *Pisa*, and the rich *Micane*,  
*Iunoman Argos*, and yet *Corinth* proud  
Of her two Seas ; all which ore-come, did yeeld  
To me their praise, and prizes of their games.

*Poppea*, Yet, in your Greekish iourney, we do heare,  
*Sparta*, and *Athens*, the two eyes of *Greece*  
Neither beheld your person, nor your skill ;  
Whether, because they did afford no games,  
Or for their to much grauitie,

*Nero*: Why ? what  
Should I haue seene in them ? but in the one,  
Hunger, blacke-pottage, and men hot to die,  
Thereby to rid themselues of miserie :  
And what in th'other ? but short Capes, long Beardes,  
Much wrangling, in things needlesse to be knowne,  
Wisedome in words, and onely austere faces,  
I will not be *Aiecelaus*, nor *Solon*.

*Nero* was there, where he might honour winn,  
And honour hath he wonn, and brought from *Greece*,  
Those spoyles which neuer Roman could obtaine,  
Spoyles won by witt, and *Tropheis* of his skill.

*Nim.* What a thing he makes it to be a Minstrill.

*Pop.* I prayse your witt, my Lord, that choose such safe  
Honors, safe spoyles, wonn without dust, or blood.

*Nero*: What, mocke ye me *Poppea* ?

*Poppea* :



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Poppea*: Nay, in good Faith my Lord, I speake in earnest,  
I hate that headie, and aduenturous crew,  
That goe to loose their owne, to purchase, but  
The breath of others, and the common voyce,  
Them that will loose there hearing for a sound;  
That by death onely, seeke to get a liuing,  
Make skarrs there beautie, and count losse of Limmes  
The commendation of a proper man,  
And so, goe halting to immortalitie:  
Such fooles I loue worse then they doe their liues.

*Nero*: But now *Poppea*, hauing laid apart  
Our boastfull spoyles, and ornaments of Tryumph.  
Come we, like *Ioue* from *Phlegra* ———

*Poppea*: O Giantlike comparison.

*Nero*: When, after all his Fiers, and wandring darts,  
He comes to bath himselfe, in *Iunos* Eyes:  
But thou, (then wrangling *Iuno*,) farre more fayre,  
Stayning the euening beauty of the Skie,  
Or the dayes brightnesse; shall make glad thy *Cesar*,  
Shalt make him proud such beauties to Inioy: *Exunt.*

*Manet, Nymphidius solus.*

*Nymph*: Such beauties to inioy, were happinesse,  
And a reward sufficient in it selfe,  
Although no other end, or hopes were aim'd at:  
But I haue other; Tis not *Poppeas* armes,  
Nor the short pleasures of a wanton bed,  
That can extinguish mine aspiring thirst  
To *Neroes* Crowne; By her loue I must climbe,  
Her bed is but a step vnto his Throne.  
Already, wise men laugh at him, and hate him;  
The people, though his Mynstrelsie doth please them,  
They feare his Cruelty, hate his exactions,  
Which, his need, still, must force him to encrease.  
The multitude, which cannot one thing long  
Like, or dislike, being cloy'd with vanitie,  
Will hate their owne delights, though *Wisedome* doe not,  
Euen wearinesse, at length, will giue them eyes.



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Thus, I by *Neroes*, and *Poppeas* fauour,  
Rais'd to the enuious height of second place,  
May gaine the first : Hate must strike *Nero* downe.  
Loue make *Nymphidius* way vnto a Crowne.

*exit.*

*Enter Seneca, Sceuius, Lucan, and Flavius.*

*Scen.* His first beginning was his Fathers death,  
His brothers poysoning, and wiues bloody end  
Came next, his mothers murther clos'd vp all :  
Yet hitherto he was but wicked, when  
The guilt of greater euills, tooke away the shame  
Of lesser, and did headlong thrust him forth,  
To be the scorne, and laughter to the world ;  
Then first, an Emperour came vpon the Stage,  
And sung to please Carmen, and Candle-sellers,  
And learnt to act, to daunce, to be a Fencer,  
And in despite o'the Maiestie of Princes,  
He fell to wrastring, and was soyl'd with dust,  
And tumbled on the Earth with seruile hands.

*Seneca* He sometimes trayned was in better studies,  
And had a Child-hood promis'd other hopes ;  
High fortunes, like stronge windes, do trie their vessels,  
Was not the Race, and Theater bigge enough,  
To haue inclos'd thy follies heere at home ?  
O could not *Rome*, and *Italic* containe  
Thy shame ? but thou must crosse the Seas to shew it ?

*Scen.* And make them that had wont to see our Consuls,  
With conquering Eagles wauiug in the field ;  
Instead of that ; behold an Emperour dauncing,  
Playing oth' stage, and what else, but to name  
Were infamie.

*Lucan.* O *Mummius*, O *Flaminius* ;  
You, whom your Vertues haue not made more famous  
Then *Neros* vices ; You went ore to Greece,  
But t'other warres, and brought home other conquests.  
You *Corinth*, and *Micæna* ouerthrew ;  
And *Persens* selfe, the Great *Achilles* race  
Ore came ; hauing *Minervas* stayned Temples.

And



*The Tragedie of Nero.*

And your slayne Ancestors of Troy reueng'd

*Senec.* They stroue with Kings; and kinglike aduersaries,  
Were euen in their Enemies made happie;  
The Macedonian Courage tryed of old,  
And the new greatnesse of the Syrian power:  
But he for *Phillip*, and *Antiochus*,  
Hath found more easie enemies to deale with,  
*Turpuus*, *Pammenes*, and a rout of Fidlers.

*Scenin:* Why all the begging Mynstrills by the way,  
He tooke along with him, and forc'd to stroue  
That he might ouercome, Imagining  
Himselfe Imortall, by such victories,

*Flau:* The Men he caried ouer were enough  
Thaue put the ar *Parthian* to his second flight  
Or the proud Indyan, taught the Roman Yoke.

*Scenin:* But they were *Neroes* men, like *Nero* arm'd  
With Luts, and Harpes, and Pipes, and Fiddle-cases:  
Soldyers toth, shadow traynd, and not the field. (worthy.

*Flau:* Therefore they brought spoyles of such Soldyers.

*Luca:* But to throw downe the walls, and Gates of Rome,  
To make an entrance for an Hobby-horse;  
To vaunt toth' people his ridiculous spoyles;  
To come with Lawrell, and with Olyues crown'd,  
For hauing beene the worst of all the Singers,  
Is beyond Patience;

*Scenin:* I and anger too,  
Had you but scene him in his Chariot ryde.  
That Chariot in which, *Augustus* late  
His Triumphs ore'so many Nations shew'd,  
And with him in the same a Minstrell plac'd,  
The whil'st the people, running by his side,  
*Hayie thou Olimpick Conqueror* did crye,  
*O haile thou Pithian*, and did fill the skie  
With shame, and voyces, Heauen would not haue heard.

*Senec:* I saw't, but turn'd away my Eyes, and Eares,  
Angry, they should be priuie to such fights.  
Why doe I stand relating of the storie,  
Which in the doing had enough to grieue me?



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Tell on, and end the tale, you, whom it pleaseth ;  
Mee mine owne sorrow stops from further speaking.

*Nero*, my loue doth make thy fault, and my grieve greater.

*Scenin*: I doe commend in *Seneca* this passion ; (ex. *Se*.  
And yet me thinkes our Countries miserie,  
Doth at our hands craue somewhat more then teares.

*Luca*: Pittie, though it doth a kind affection show,  
(If it end there) our weakentse makes vs know.

*Flavi*: Let children weepe, and men seeke remedie,

*Sceni*: Stoutly, and like a Souldier, *Flavius* :  
Yet, to seeke remedie to a Princes ill,  
Seldome, but it doth the Phisitian kill.

*Flavi*: And if it doe *Sceninus*, it shall take  
But a deuoted soule from *Flavius*,  
Which, to my Coantrey, and the Gods of Rome,  
Alreadie sacred is, and giuen away,  
Death is no stranger vnto me, I haue  
The doubtfull hazard in twelue Battailles throwne,  
My chaunce was life.

*Luca*: Why doe we goe to fight in Brittanie ?  
And end our liues vnder an other Sunne ?  
Seeke causelesse dangers out ? The German might  
Enioy his Woods, and his owne Allis drinke,  
Yet we walke safely in the streets of Rome :

*Bodinea* hinders not, but we might liue,  
Whom, we doe hurt ; Them we call enemies,  
And those our Lords that spoyle, and murder vs.

*Scenin*: Nothing is hard to them that dare to die.  
This Noble resolution in you Lords,  
Hartens me to disclose some thoughts that I  
The matter is of waight and dangerous.

*Luca*: I see you feare vs *Sceninus*.

*Scenin*: Nay, Nay, although the thing be full of feare.

*Flavi*: Tell it to faithfull Eares, what care it bee.

*Scenin*: Faith let it goe, it will but trouble vs,  
Bee hurtfull to the speaker, and the hearer.

*Luca*: If our long friendship, or the opinion.

*Scenin*: Why should I feare to tell them ?

Why



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Why is he not a Parricide, a Player?

Nay *Lucan* is he not thine Enemy?

Hate not the Heauens, as well, as men, to see

That condem'd head: and you O righteous Gods

Whither so ere you now are fled, and will

No more looke downe vpon th'oppressed Earth;

O seuerer anger of the highest Gods,

And thou sterne power, to whom the Greekes assigne

Scourges, and swords to punish proud mens wrongs,

If you be more then names found out to awe vs,

And that we doe not vainely build you alters,

Aid that iust arme, that's bent to execute

What you should doe.

*Luca.* Stay, y'are caried too much away *Sceninus.*

*Sceni.* Why, what will you say for him? hath he not  
Sought to suppress your Poem, to bereaue  
That honour euery tongue in duty paid it.

Nay, what can you say for him, hath he not

Broa'cht his owne wiues (a chaste wiues) breast, and torne

With Scithian hands his Mothers bowels vp,

The Inhospitable *Caucasus* is milde:

The More, that, in the boyling desert, seekes

With blood of stranger to imbrue his iawes

Vpbraides the Roman, now with barbarousnesse

*Luca:* You are to earnest,

I neither can, nor will I speake for him:

And, though he sought my learned paynes to wrong,

I hate him not for that, My verse shall liue

When *Neroes* body shall be throwne in Tiber,

And times to come shall blesse those wicked armes;

I loue th'vnnaturall wounds, from whence did flow

Another Ciria, a new Hellicon.

I hate him that he is Romes enemy,

An enemy to Vertue; sits on high

To shame the seate; And in that hate, my life,

And blood, he mingle on the earth with yours.

*Flavi:* My deeds *Sceninus* shall speake my consent.

*Sceni.* Tis answerd, as I lookt for, noble Poet,

Worthy



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Worthy the double Lawrell ; *Flavius*,  
Good lucke I see, doth vertuous meanings ayde,  
And therefore haue the Heauens forborne their duties,  
To grace our swords with glorious blood of Tyrants.

*EXCHAM.*

### *Finis Actus Primi.*

---

### *Actus Secundus.*

*Enter Petronius Solus.*

**H**ERE waites *Poppea* her *Nimphidius* comming,  
And hath this garden, and these walkes chose out,  
To blesse her with more pleasures then their owne :  
Not onely Arrashangings, and filke beeds  
Are guilty of the faults we blame them for :  
Some what these Arbors, and trees doe know,  
Whil't your kind shades, you to these night sports show.  
Night sports ? Faith, they are done in open day,  
And the Sunne see'th, and enuieth their play.  
Hither haue I Loue-sicke *Antonius* brought,  
And thrust him on occasion so long sought ;  
Shewed him the Empresse, in a thicket by,  
Her loues approach waiting with greedie Eye ;  
And told him, if he euer meant to proue,  
The doubtfull issue of his hopelesse Loue ;  
This is the place, and time wherein to try it,  
Women will heere the suite, that will deny it.  
The suit's not hard, that she comes for to take ;  
Who (hott in lust of men) doth difference make ?  
At last, loth, willing, to her did he pace ;  
Arme him *Priapus*, with thy powerfull Mace.  
But see, they comming are ; how they agree  
Heere will I harken, shroud me gentle tree.

*Enter Poppea and Antonius.*

*Anto.* Seeke not to grieue that heart which is thine owne,  
In



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

In Loues sweete fires, let heat of rage burne out ;  
These browes could neuer yet to wrinkle learne,  
Nor anger out of such faire eyes looke forth.

*Poppea:* You may sollicite your presumptuous suites ;  
You, duety may, and shame too layd aside,  
Disturbe my priuacies, and I forsooth,  
Must be afeard euen to be angry at you.

*Anto:* What shame is't to be mastred by such beautie ?  
Who, but to serue you, comes, how wants he dutie ?  
Or if it be a shame, the shame is yours ;  
The fault is onely in your Eies, they drew me ;  
Cause you were louely, therefore did I loue :  
O, if to Loue you, anger you so much,  
You should not haue such cheekes, nor lips to touch,  
You should not haue your snow, nor currall spy'd ;  
If you but looke on vs, in vaine you chide,  
We must not see your Face, nor heare your speech :  
Now, whilst you Loue forbid, you Loue doe teach.

*Pet.* He doth better then I thought he would.

*Pop:* I will not learne my beauties worth of you,  
I know you neither are the first, nor greatest  
Whom it hath mou'd : He whom the World obayes  
Is fear'd with anger of my threatning Eyes.  
It is for you a farre off to adore it,  
And not to reach at it with sawsie hands.

Feare, is the Loue that's due to Gods, and Princes

*Pet.* All this is but to edge his appetite.

*Ant.* O doe not see thy faire in that false glasse  
Of outward difference ; Looke into my heart,  
There, shalt thou see thy selfe, Inthroned set  
In greater Maiesty, then all the pompe  
Of Rome, or Nero ; Tis not the crowching awe,  
And Ceremonie, with which we flatter Princes,  
That can to Loues true duties be compar'd.

*Pop:* Sir, let me goe, or Ile make knowne your Loue  
To them, that shall requite it, but with hate.

*Pet.* On, on, thou hast the goale, the fort is beaten,  
Women are wonne when they begin to threaten.



## The Tragedie of Nero.

*Anto.* Your Noblenesse doth warrant me from that,  
Nor need you others helpe, to punish me,  
Who, by your forehead am condem'd, or free.  
They, that to be reuendg'd do bend their minde,  
Seeke alwayes recompence, in that same kind  
The wrong was done them; Loue was mine offence,  
In that reuenge, in that seeke recompence.

*Popp.* Further to answere, will still cause replies,  
And those as ill doe please me, as your selfe:  
If you'le an answere take, that's breefe, and true,  
I hate my selfe, If I be lou'd of you. *exit Popp.*

*Petro.* What gone? but she will come againe sure, no;  
It passeth cleane my cunning, all my rules;  
For Womens wantonnesse there is no rule.  
To take her, in the itching of her Lust,  
A propper young-man putting forth himselfe?  
Why Fate; There's Fate and hidden prouidence  
In codpiece matters.

*Anto.* O vnhappy Man,  
What comfort haue I now *Petronius*?

*Pet.* Counsell your selfe, He teach no more but learne.

*Ant.* This comfort yet; He shall not so escape,  
Who causeth my disgrace, *Nimphidius*  
Whom had I here.—Well, For my true-hearts loue  
I see she hates me; And shall I loue one  
That hates me; and bestowes what I deserue  
Vpon my riual? no, Farewell *Poppea*,  
Farewell *Poppea*, and farewell all Loue;  
Yet thus much shall it still preuaile in me,  
That I will hate *Nimphidius* for thee.

*Pet.* Farewell to her, to my *Euanthe* welcome,  
Who, now, will to my burning kisses stoope,  
Now, with an easie cruelty deny,  
That, which she, rather then the asker, would  
Haue forced from her, then begins her selfe.  
Their loues, that list, vpon great Ladies set;  
I still will loue the Wench that I can get.

*Exeunt.*

*Enter*



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Nero, Tigellinus, Epaphroditus  
and Neophilus.*

*Nero:* *Tigellinus*, said the villaine *Proculus*  
I was throwne downe in running?

*Tigel:* My Lord, he said that you were crown'd for that  
You could not doe.

*Nero*, For that I could not doe?  
Why, *Elis* saw me doe't, and doe't with wonder  
Of all the Iudges, and the lookers on:  
And yet, to see, A villaine? could not doe't?  
Who did it better? I warrant you he said  
I from the Chariot fell against my will.

*Tigil:* He said my Lord, you were throwne out of it,  
All crusht, and maim'd, and almost bruis'd to death.

*Nero*, Malicious Rogue, when I fell willingly,  
To show of purpose, with what little hurt  
Might a good rider beare a forced fall.  
How sayest thou? *Tigellinus*, I am sure  
Thou hast in driuing as much skill as he.

*Tigil:* My Lord, you greater cunning shew'd in falling,  
Then had you fate.

*Nero*, I know I did; or bruised in my fall?  
Hurt! I protest I felt no griefe in it.

Goe *Tigellinus*, fetch the villaines head,  
This makes me see his heart in other things?  
Fetch me his head, he nere shall speake againe.

*ex. Tigil.*

What doe we Princes differ, from the durt,  
And basenesse of the common Multitude,  
If to the scorne of each malicious tongue  
We subiect are: For that I had no skill;  
Not he, that his farre famed daughter set  
A prise to victorie, and had bin crown'd  
With thirteene Sutors deaths, till he at length  
By fate of Gods, and seruants treason fell,  
(Shoulder pack't *Pelops* glorying in his spoyles,)  
Could with more skill his coupled horses guide.  
Euen as a Barke, that through the moouing Flood.



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Her linnen wings, and the forc't ayre doe beare,  
The Byllowes some, she smoothly cutts them through;  
So past my burning Axeltree along,  
The people follow, with their eyes and voyce,  
And now the wind doth see it selfe outrun,  
And the Clouds wonder to be left behind;  
Whilst the void ayre is fild with shoutes and noyse.  
And *Neroes* name doth beate the brasen Skie,  
*Jupiter* enuying, loath doth heare my praise:  
Then there greene bowes, and Crownes of *Olive* wre'aths  
The Conquerors praise, they giue me as my due,  
And yet this Rogue sayth, no we haue no skill.

*Enter a seruant to them.*

*Seruant*, My Lord, the Stage, and all the furniture:

*Nero*: I haue no skill to driue a Chariot:

Had he but robde me, broke my treasurie,  
The red-Sea's mine, mine are the *Indian* stones,  
The Worlds mine owne, then, cannot I be robde?  
But spightfully, to vndermine my fame,  
To take away my arte; he would my life  
As well, no doubt; could he tould how.

*Enter Tegillinus, with Proculus head.*

*Neoph*: My Lord,

*Tegillinus* is backe come with *Proculus* head

*Strikes  
him*

*Nero*, O cry thee mercie good *Neophitus*;

Giue him fise hundred sesterces for amends,

Hast brought him *Tegillinus*?

*Tegil*: Heres his head my Lord.

*Nero*, His tongue had bin enough,

*Tegil*: I did as you commanded me my Lord.

*Nero*, Thou toldst not me, though he had such a Nose,

Now are you quiet, and haue quieted me;

This tis to be commander of the World,

Let them extoll weake pittie that doe neede it,

Let meane men cry to haue Law, and Iustice done

And tell their griefes to *Heauen*, that heares them not

Kings must vpon the Peoples headlesse courses

Walke to securitie, and ease of minde.

Why



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Why what haue we to doe with th'ayrie names  
(That old age, and *Philosophers* found out,)  
Of *Iustice*, and ne're certaine Equitie ;  
The Gods reuenge themselves, and so will we ;  
Where right is scand, Authoritie's orethrowne,  
We haue a high prerogatiue about it ;  
Slaues may doe what is lust, we, what we please,  
The people will repine, and thinke it ill,  
But they must beare, and prayse too, what we will.

*Enter Cornutus to them.*

*Neoph:* My Lord, *Cornutus* whom you sent for's come.

*Nero,* Welcome good *Cornutus*.

Are all thigs ready for the Stage,  
As I gaue charge.

*Corn:* They onely stay your comming.

*Nero,* *Cornutus*, I must act to day *Orestus*.

*Cornu:* You haue done that already; and too truly --- *aside*.

*Nero,* And when our Sceane is done, I meane besides  
To read some compositions of mine owne,  
Which for the great opinion I my selfe,  
And *Rome* In generall, of thy Iudgement, hath,  
Before I publish them, Ile shew them thee.

*Cornu:* My Lord, my disabilities

*Nero:* I know thy modestie,  
Ile onely shew thee, now, my works beginning :  
Goe see *Epaphroditus*,

Musick made ready, I will sing to day.

*Exit Eps.*

*Cornutus* I pray thee, come neere,  
And let me heare thy Iudgement in my paynes;  
I would haue thee more familiar good *Cornutus*,

*Nero* doth prise desert, and more esteemes  
Them, that in knowledge second him, then power,  
Marke with what style, and state my worke begins.

*Cornu:* Might not my Interruption offend  
Whats your workes name my Lord, what write you of ?

*Nero,* I meane to write the deeds of all the *Romans*.

*Cornu:* Of all the *Romans* ? a huge argument

*Nero,* I haue not yet bethought me of a Title



## The Tragedie of Nero.

You Enthral Powers which the wide Fortunes doome he reades  
Of Empyre crown'd, seauen Mountaine-seated Rome  
Full blowne; Inspire me with Machlæan rage,  
That I may bellow out Romes Prentisage,  
As when the Menades doe fill their Drums  
And crooked harnes with Mimalonean hummes  
And Ennion doe Ingeminate a round  
Which reparable Ecchoe doth resound.

How doest thou like our Muses paines *Cornutus*.

*Cornu*: The verses haue more in them, then I see;  
Your worke my Lord I doubt will be too long.

*Nero*, Too long?

*Tigel*: Too long?

*Cornu*: I, If you write the deedes of all the *Romans*  
How many Bookes thinke you't include it in?

*Nero*, I thinke to write about foure hundred Bookes.

*Cornu*: Foure hundred? why my Lord the'yle nere be read.

*Nero*, Hah?

*Tigel*: Why he, whom you esteeme so much *Crisippus*,  
Wrote many more.

*Cornu*: But they were profitable to common life  
And did Men, Honestie, and Wisedome teach.

*Nero*: *Tigellinus*? *Exit Nero & Tigeli.*

*Cornu*: See with what earnestnesse he crau'd my Iudgment,  
And now he freely hath it, how it likes him?

*Neoph*: The Prince is angry, and his fall is neere;  
Let vs begon, least we partake his ruines.

*Exeunt omnes præter Cornu.*

*Manet Cornutus solus.*

What should I doe at Court? I cannot lye;  
Why didst thou call me, *Nero*, from my Booke?  
Didst thou for flatterie of *Cornutus* looke?  
No, let those purple Fellowes that stand by thee,  
(That admire shew, and things that thou canst giue,  
Leaue to please Truth, and Vertue, to please thee.  
*Nero*, there's nothing in thy power, *Cornutus*  
Doth wish or feare.

*Enter*



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Tigellinus to him.*

*Tigel:* Tis *Neroes* pleasure that you straight depart  
To *Giara*, and there remaine confin'd:  
Thus he, out of his Princely Clemencie,  
Hath Death, your due, turn'd but to banishment.

*Cornu:* Why *Tigellinus*?

*Tigel:* I haue done, vpon your perill goe, or stay, *ex Ti.*

*Cornu:* And why should Death? or Banishment be due?

For speaking, that which was requir'd, my thought;

O why doe Princes loue to be deceiu'd?

And, euen, doe force abuses on themselues?

There Eares are so with pleasing speech beguil'd,

That Truth they mallice, Flatterie, truth account,

And their owne Soule, and vnderstanding lost,

Goe (what they are) to seeke in other men.

Alas, weake Prince, how hast thou punisht me,

To banish me from thee? O let me goe.

And dwell in *Taurus*, dwell in *Ethiope*,

So that I doe not dwell at *Rome*, with thee.

The farther, still, I goe from hence, I know,

The farther I leaue Shame, and Vice behind.

Where can I goe, but I shall see thee, *Sunne*?

And *Heauen* will be as neere me, still, as here.

Can they, so farre, a knowing soule exyle,

That her owne rooffe she sees not ore her head?

*Exit.*

*Enter Piso, Sceuinus, Lucan, Flauins.*

*Piso,* Noble Gentlemen, what thanks, what recompence  
Shall hee giue you, that giue to him the world;

One life to them, that must so many venture,

And that, the worst of all, is too meane paye;

Yet can I giue no more; Take that, bestow it

Vpon your seruice.

*Lucan:* O *Piso*, that vouchsafest,

To grace our headlesse partie with thy name;

Whom, hauing our conductors, we need not

Haue fear'd to goe again the well try'd vallor

Of *Iulius*, or stayednesse of *Augustus*,

Much lesse the shame, and Womanhood of *Nero*;

When



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

When we had once, giuen out, that our pretences  
Were all for thee, our end, to make thee Prince,  
They thronging came to giue their names, Men, Women,  
Gentlemen, People, Soldiers, Senators,  
The Campe, and Cittie, grew asham'd that *Nero*,  
And *Piso* should be offered them together.

*Scen.* We seeke not now (as in the happy dayes  
O'th common wealth they did, for libertie;  
O you, deere ashes, *Cassius* and *Brutus*  
That was with you entomb'd, there let it rest,  
We are contented with the galling yoke,  
If they will only leaue vs necks to beare it;  
We seeke no longer freedome; we seeke life  
At least, not to be murdred, let vs die  
On Enemies swords; Shall we, whom neither  
The *Median* Bow, nor *Macedonian* Speare  
Nor the firce *Gaule*, nor painted *Briton* could  
Subdue, lay downe our neckes to Tyrants axe?  
Why doe we talke of Vertue, that obay  
Weakenesse, and Vice.

*Piso:* Haue patience good *Sceninus*

*Lucan:* Weakenesse, and seruile gouernment we hitherto  
Obeyed haue, which, that we may no longer,  
We haue our liues, and fortunes now set vp,  
And haue our cause with *Pisoes* credit strengthened.

*Flavi:* Which makes it doubtfull, whether loue to him  
Or *Neroes* hatred, hath diawne more vnto vs.

*Piso:* I see the good thoughts you haue of me, Lords.  
Lets now proceede to th' purpose of our meeting,  
I pray you take your places.  
Lets haue some Paper brought

*Scenin:* Whose within.

*Enter Melichus to them.*

*Meli:* My Lord

*Scen:* Some Inke, and Paper

*Exit Meli. & enter  
again with Incke,*

*Flavi:* Whose that *Sceninus*?

*and Paper.*

*Sceni:* It is my freed man *Melichus*.

*Luca:* Is he trustie?

*Scenin:*



The Tragedie of Nero.

*Sceuin:* I for as great matters, as we are about.

*Piso:* And those are great ones.

*Luca:* I aske not that we meane to neede his trust.  
Gaine hath great soueragintie ore seruile mindes.

*Sceui:* O but my benifits haue bound him to me,  
I, from abondman, haue his state not onely  
Aduanc't to freedome, but to wealth and credit.

*Piso:* *Meli.* waite ith' next chamber tell we call. *obsoudit se*  
The thing determinde on our meeting now,  
Is of the meanes, and place, due circumstance,  
As to the doing of things t'is requir'd,  
So done it names the action.

*Meli:* I wonder,  
What makes this new resort to haunt our house,  
When wonted *Lucius Piso* to come hither?  
Or *Lucan*, when so oft, as now of late. *aside*

*Piso:* And since the field, and open shew of armes  
Dislike you, and that for the generall good,  
You meane to end all styrres, in end of him:  
That as the ground must first be thought vpon.

*Meli:* Besides, this comming cannot be for forme,  
Our visitation, they goe aside,  
And haue long conferences by themselves. *aside*

*Luca:* *Piso*, his comming to your house at *Baia*,  
To bathe, and banquet, will fit meanes afford,  
amidst his cups, to end his hated life,  
Let him die drunke, that nere liu'd soberly.

*Piso:* O be it farre, that I should staine my Table,  
And Gods of Hospitalitie with blood;  
Let not our cause (now Innocent) be soyld  
With such a blot, nor *Pisoes* name made hatefull.  
What place can better fit our account  
Then his owne house? that boundlesse enuied heape,  
Built with the spoyles, and blood of Cittizens  
That hath taken vp the Citie, left no roome  
For *Rome* to stand on; *Romanes* get you gone  
And dwell at *Veia*, If that *Veia* too  
This house ore runne not.



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Lucan.* But twill be hard to doe it in his house,  
And harder to escape being done. *Piso.* Not so,  
*Rufus* the Captaine of the Guard's with vs,  
And diuers other oth' *Pretorian* Band  
Already made; many, though vnacquainted  
With our intents, haue had disgrace and wrongs,  
Which grieue them still; most will be glad of change,  
And euen they that lou'd him best, when once  
They see him gone, will smile o'th comming times,  
Let goe things past, and looke to their owne safetie:  
Besides, th'astonishment and feare will be  
So great, so sodaine, that 'twill hinder them  
From doing any thing.

*Meli.* No priuate businesse can concerne them all; *aside.*  
Their countenances are troubled, and looke sad,  
Doubt and Importance in their face is read.

*Lucan.* Yet still I thinke it were  
Safer t'attempt him priuate, and alone.

*Flavi.* But 'twill not carry that opinion with it,  
Twill seeme more foule, and come from priuate malice.  
*Brutus*, and they, to right the common cause,  
Did chuse a publike place.

*Serui.* Our deed is honest, why should it seeke corners?  
Tis for the people done, let them behold it;  
Let me haue them a witnesse of my truth,  
And loue toth' Common-wealth; The danger's greater,  
So is the glory. Why should our pale counsels  
Tend whether feare, rather then vertue calls them:  
I doe not like these cold considering;  
First, let our thoughts looke vp to what is honest,  
Next, to what's safe; If danger may deterre vs,  
Nothing that's great, or good shall ere be done;  
And, when we first gaue hands vpon this deed  
Toth' commons safetie, we our owne gaue vp.  
Let no man venture on a princes death,  
How bad soeuer, with belife to escape;  
Dispaire must be our hope, fame, or reward.  
To make the generall liking to concurre.

With



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

With others, were euen to strike him in his shame,  
Or (as he thinks) his glory, on the Stage,  
And so too truely make't a Tragedy;  
When all the people cannot chuse but clap  
So sweet a close, and 'twill not *Cesar* be  
That shall be slaine, a *Romane* Prince:  
Twill be *Alcmaon*, or blind *Oedipus*.

*Meli.* And if it be of publique matters, 'tis not *aside.*  
Like to be talke, or idle fault finding,  
On which the coward onely spends his wisdom:  
These are all men of action, and of spirit,  
And dare performe what they determine on.

*Luca.* What thinke you of *Poppea*, *Tigellinus*,  
And tho'ther odious Instruments of Court:  
Were it not best at once to rid them all?

*Serui.* In *Cesars* ruine, *Anthony* was spared:  
Lets not our cause with needlesse blood distaine,  
One onely mou'd, the change will not appeare  
When too much licence giuen to the sword,  
Though against ill, will make euen good men feare:  
Besides, things settled, you at pleasure may  
By Law, and publique Iudgement haue them rid.

*Meli.* And if it be but talke oth' State, 'tis Treason,  
Like it they cannot, that they cannot doe:  
If seeke to mend it, and remooue the Prince,  
That's highest Treason; change his Councillours, *aside.*  
That's alteration of the gouernment,  
The common cloke that Treasons musted in;  
If laying force aside, to seeke by suite,  
And faire petition, t'haue the State reform'd,  
That's tuting of the Prince, and takes away,  
Thone his person, this his Soueraigntie;  
Barely in priuate talke to shew dislike  
Of what is done, is dangerous; therefore the action  
Mislike you, cause the doer likes you not?  
Men are not fit to liue ith state they hate.

*Piso.* Though we would all haue that imployment sought,  
Yet, since your worthy forwardnesse, *Seruius*,



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Preuents vs, And so Nobly beggs for danger :  
Be this the chosen hand to doe the deed,  
The fortune of the Empire speed your sword.

*Sceni:* Vertue, and Heauen speed it ; O you homeborne  
Gods of our countrey, *Romulus*, and *Vesta*,  
That *Thuscan Tiber*, and *Romes* towers defends.  
Forbid not yet at length a happie end  
To former euils ; Let this hand reuenge  
The wronged world ; enough we now haue suffered. *exennt.*

*Manet Melichus solus.*

*Meli* Tush, all this long Consulting's more then words,  
It ends not there ; th'haue some attempt, some plot,  
Against the state : well, Ile obserue it farther,  
And if I find it, make my profit of it. *exennt.*

*Finis Actus Secundus.*

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### *Actus Tertius.*

*Enter Poppea Solus.*

**P**oppea: I lookt *Nymphidius* would haue come ere this,  
Makes he no greater hast to our embraces ?  
Or, doth the easines abate his edge ?  
Or, seeme we not as faire still as we did ?  
Or, is he so with *Neroes* playing wonne,  
That he, before *Poppea*, doth preferre it ?  
Or doth he thinke to haue occasion still ?  
Sill, to haue time to waite on our stolne meetings ?

*Enter Nymphidius to her.*

*Poppe:* But see his presence now doth end those doubts.  
What ist *Nymphidius* hath so long detain'd you ?

*Nymph:* Faith Lady, causes strong enough,  
High walls, bard dores, and gaurds of armed men.

*Poppe:* Were you Imprisoned, then, as you were going  
To the Theater.

*Nymphi:* Not in my going Lady,

But



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

But, but in the Theater, I was Imprisoned :  
For, after he was once vpon the Stage,  
The Gates were more seuerely lookt into  
Then at a towne besieg'd; No man, no cause  
Was Currant, no, nor passant; At other sights  
The striefe is only to get in, but here  
The stirre was all, in getting out againe;  
Had, we not bin kept to it so, I thinke  
T'would nere haue bin so tedious, though I know,  
'Twas hard to iudge, whether his doing of it  
Were more absur'd, then 'twas for time to doe it.  
But when we once were forc't to be spectators,  
compel'd to thet, which should haue bin a pleasure,  
We could no longer beare the wearisomnesse :  
No paine so irkesome, as a forc't delight;  
Some fell downe dead, one seem'd at least to doe so,  
Vnder that colour, to be carried forth,  
Then death first pleasur'd men, the shape of feare  
Was put on gladly, some clombe ore the walls,  
And so, by falling caught in earnest that,  
With th'other did dissemble; There were women,  
(That being not able to intreat the guard  
To let them passe the gates,) were brought to bedde  
Amid'st the throngs of men, and made *Lucina*  
Blush, to see that vnwonted companie.

*Poppe:* If 'twere so straightly kept, how got you forth??

*Nimp:* Faith Lady I came, pretending haist  
In Face and Countenance, told them I was sent  
For things, bith' Prince forgot about the sceane,  
Which, both my credit made them to beleeeue,  
And *Nero*, newly whispered me before.  
Thus did I passe the gates, the danger Ladie  
I haue not yet escap'r.

*Poppe:* What danger meane you?

*Nim:* The danger of his anger, when he knowes  
How I thus shrunke away, for there stood knaues  
That put downe in their Tables all that stir'd,  
And markt in each there cheerefulnesse, or sadnesse.



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Poppe:* I warrant Ile excuse you : But I pray,  
Let's be a little better for your sight ;  
How did our Princely husband act *Orestes* ?  
Did he not wish againe his Mother liuing ?  
Her death would adde great life vnto his part:  
But come I pray, the storie of your sight.

*Nim:* O doe not drine me to those hatefull paines;  
Lady, I was too much in seeing vext,  
Let it not be redoubled with the telling ;  
I now am well, and heare, my eares set free;  
O be mercifull, doe not bring me backe  
Vnto my prison, at least free your selfe,  
It will not passe away, but stay the time;  
Wracke out the houres in length ; O giue me leaue,  
as one that wearied with the toyle at sea,  
And now on wished shore hath firm'd his foote ;  
He lookes about, and glads his thoughts and eyes,  
With sight oth' greene cloath'd ground, and leauy trees,  
Of flowers that begge more then the looking on,  
And likes these other waters narrow shores ;  
So let me lay my wearines in these armes,  
Nothing but kisses to this mouth discourse,  
My thought be compast in those circl'd Eyes ;  
Eyes on no obie& looke, but on these Cheekes ;  
Be blest my hands with touch of those round breasts,  
Whiter and softer then the downe of Swans.  
Let me of thee, and of thy beauties glory,  
And endlesse tell, but neuer wearying story.

*Exeunt.*

*Enter Nero, Ephaproditus, Neophilus.*

*Nero:* Come Sirs, I faith, how did you like my acting ?  
What ? wast not as you lookt for ?

*Epaph:* Yes my Lord, and much beyond.

*Nero:* Did I not doe it to the life ?

*Epaph:* The very doing neuer was so liuely  
As now this counterfeyting.

*Nero:* And when I came,  
Toth' point of *Agrippa*, *Clitemnestras* death,  
Did it not mooue the feeling auditory ?

*Epaph:*



## The Tragedie of Nero.

*Epaph:* They had beene stones, whom that could not hate

*Nero:* Did not my voyce hold out well to the end? (mou'd,  
And seru'd me afterwards afresh to sing with.

*Neoph:* We know *Apollo* cannot match your voyce.

*Epaph:* By *Ioue*, I thinke you are the God himselſe  
Come from aboue, to ſhew your hidden arts;  
And fill vs men with wonder of your skill.

*Nero:* Nay faith ſpeake truely, doe not flatter me;  
I know you need not: flattery's but where  
Deſert is meane.

*Epaph:* I ſweare by thee O *Cesar*;  
Then whom no power of Heauen I honour more,  
No mortall voice can paſſe, or equall thine.

*Nero:* They tell of *Orpheus*, when he tooke his Lute,  
And mou'd the noble Iuory with his touch:  
*Hebrus* ſtood ſtill, *Pangea* bow'd his head,  
*Oſſa* then firſt ſhooke off his ſnowe, and came  
To liſten to the moouings of his ſong;  
The gentle *Popler*, tooke the Oake along,  
And call'd the *Pyne* downe, from his Mountaine ſeate;  
The *Virgine Bay*, although the Arts ſhe hates  
Oth' *Delphick* God, was with his voice or come,  
He his twice-loſt *Euridice* bewailes,  
And *Proſerpines* vaine gifts, and makes the ſhores  
And hollow caues of forreſts now vntreed  
Beare his grieve company, and all things teacheth  
His loſt loues name: Then water, ayre, and ground  
*Euridice*, *Euridice*, reſound.  
Theſe are bould tales, of which the *Greekes* haue ſtore;  
But if he could from Hell once more returne,  
And would compare his hand and voice with mine,  
I, though himſelfe were iudge, he then ſhould ſee,  
How much the *Latine* ſtaines the *Thracian* lyar.  
I oft haue walkt by *Tibers* flowing bankes,  
And heard the Swan ſing her owne Epitaph  
When ſhe heard me, ſhe held her peace and died.  
Let others raiſe from earthly things their praiſe,  
Heauen hath ſtood ſtill to heare my happy ayres

And



*The Tragedie of Nero.*

And ceast th'eternall Musicke of the *Spheares*  
To marke my voyce, and mend their tunes by mine.

*Neoph:* O dimne voyce,

*Epaph:* Happy are they that heare it.

*Enter Tigellinus to them.*

*Nero:* But here comes *Tigellinus*, come, thy bill,  
Are there so many; I see I haue enemies.

*Epaph:* Haue you put *Caius* in, I saw him frowne.

*Neoph:* And, in the midst oth' Emperors act int  
*Gallus* laught out, and as I thinke in scorne.

*Nero:* *Vespasian* too a sleepe; was he so drowsie?  
Well, he shall sleepe the Iron sleepe of death  
And did *Thrasea* looke so souerly on vs?

*Tigil:* He neuer smilde, my Lord, nor would vouchsafe  
With one applause to grace your action.

*Nero:* Our action needed not be grac'd by him,  
Hee's our old enemy, and still Malignes vs;  
T'will haue an end, nay it shall haue an end.

Why, I haue bin too pittifull, too remisse,

My easinesse is laught at, and contemn'd,

But I will change it; Not, as heretofore,

By singling out them, one by one to death,

Each common man can such reuenges haue;

A Princes anger must lay desolate

Citties, Kingdomes consume, Roote vp mankind.

O could I liue to see the generall end,

Behold the world enwrapt in funerall flame,

When, as the *Sunne* shall lend his beames to burne

What he before brought forth, and water serue,

Not to extinguish, but to nurse the fire:

Then, like the *Salamander*, bathing me

In the last Ashes of all mortall things

Let me giue vp this breath; *Priam* was happie,

Happie indeed, he saw his *Troy* burnt,

And *Illion* lye on heapes; Whil' st thy pure streames,

(Diuine *Scamander*) did run *Phrygian* blood

And heard the pleasant cries of *Troian* Mothers,

Could I see *Rome*, so!

*Tigil.*



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Tigell:* Your Maiestie may easily,  
Without this trouble to your sacred mind.

*Nero:* What may I easily doe? kill thee, or him,  
How may I rid you all? where is the Man  
That will all others end, and last himselfe?  
O that I had thy Thunder in my hand,  
Thou idle Rouer, Ile not shoote at trees,  
And spend in woods my vnregarded vengeance,  
Ile sheuire them downe vpon their guilty roofes,  
And fill the streetes with bloody burials.  
But 'tis not Heauen can giue me what I seeke;  
To you, you hated kingdomes of the night,  
You severe powers, that not like those about,  
Will with faire words, or childrens cryes be wonne,  
That haue a stile beyond that Heauen is proud off,  
Deriuing not from Art a makers Name,  
But in destruction power, and terror shew:  
To you I flye for succour: you, whose dwellings  
For torments are bely'de, must giue me ease;  
Furies, lend me your fires; no they are here,  
They must be other fires; materiall brands  
That must the burning of my heat allay;  
I bring to you no rude vnpractiz'd hands,  
Already doe they reeke with mothers blood:  
Tush that's but innocents, to what now I meane,  
Alasse what euell could those yeeres commit,  
The world in this shall see my settled wit.

*exunt.*

*Enter Seneca, Petronius.*

*Senec:* *Petronius*, you were at the Theater.

*Petron:* *Seneca* I was, and saw your kingly Papyll  
In Mynstrilshabit, stand before the Iudges,  
Bowling those hands, which the worlds Scepter hold,  
And with great awe and reuerence beseeching  
Indifferent hearing, and an equall doome:  
Then *Cesar* doubted first to be oreborne,  
And so he ioyn'd himselfe to th'other fingers,  
And straightly all other Lawes oth' Stage obseru'd,  
As not (though weary) to sit downe, not spit;



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Not wipe his sweat off, but with what he wore;  
Meane time how would he eye his aduersaries,  
How he would seeke t<sup>h</sup> haue all they did disgract,  
Traduce them priuily; openly raile at them:  
And them he could not conquer so, he would  
Corrupt with money, to doe worse then he.  
This was his singing part, his acting now.

*Senec:* Nay euen end here, for I haue heard enough,  
I haue a Fidler heard him, let me not  
See him a Player, nor the fearefull voyce  
Of *Romes* great Monarch, now command in Iest  
Our Prince be *Agamemnon* in a Play.

*Petron:* Why *Seneca*, Tis better in Play  
Be *Agamemnon*, then himsele indeed;  
How oft, with danger of the field beset,  
Or with home mutineys, would he vnbee  
Himsele, or, ouer cruell alters weeping,  
Wish, that with putting off a vizard, hee  
Might his true inward sorrow lay aside;  
The shewes of things are better then themselues:  
How doth it stirre this ayrye part of vs,  
To heare our Poets tell imagin'd fights,  
And the strange blowes, that fained courage giues,  
When I *Achilles* heare vpon the Stage  
Speake Honour, and the greatnesse of his soule;  
Me thinkes I too, could on a *Phrygian* Speare  
Runne boldly, and make tales for after times;  
But when we come to act it in the deed,  
Death mares this brauery, and the vgly feares  
Of th'other world, sit on the proudest browe,  
And boasting valour looseth his red cheeke.

*A Romane to them.*

*Rom:* Fire, fire, helpe, we burne.

2. *Rom:* Fire, water, fire helpe fire.

*Senec:* Fire, where?

*Petron:* Where? what fire.

*Rom:* O round about, here, there, on euery side.  
The girdling flame, doth with vnkind embraces



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Compassse the Citie.

*Petro:* How came this fire, by whom?

*Senec:* Wast chance, or purpose?

*Petro:* Why is't not quencht?

*Rom:* Alas there are a many there with weapons,  
Aod whether it be for pray, or by command,  
They hinder: nay, they throwe on fire-brands.

*Enter Antonius to them.*

*Anton:* The fire encrease, and will not be staide,  
But like a streame that tumbling from a hill,  
Orewhelmes the fields, orewhelmes the hopefull toyle  
Oth' husbandman, and headlong beares the woods;  
The vnweeting Shepheard on a Rocke a farre,  
Amazed, heares the fearefull noyle; so here,  
Danger and Terror striue, which shall exceed,  
Some cry, and yet are well, some are kild silent,  
Some kindly runne to helpe their neighbours house,  
The whilest their own's a fire: some saue their goods,  
And leaue their dearer pledges in the flame;  
One takes his litle sonnes with trembling hands,  
Tother his house-Gods saues, which could not him,  
All bann the doore, and with wishes kill  
Their absent murderer.

*Petro:* What? are the *Gauls* returnd?  
Doth *Brenius* brandish fire-brands againe.

*Senec:* What can Heauen now vnto our sufferings adde.

*Enter Another Romane to them.*

*Rom:* O all goes downe, *Rome* falleth from the Roofe,  
The wind's aloft, the conquering flame turnes all  
Into it selfe; Nor doe the Gods escape,  
*Pleidds* burnes, *Iupiter Stator* burnes.  
The Altar now is made a sacrifice;  
An *Vesta* mournes, to see her Virgin fires  
Mingle with prophane ashes.

*Senec:* Heauen, hast thou set this end, to *Roman* greatnesse?  
Were the worlds spoyles, for this, to *Rome* deuided,  
To make but our fires bigger?  
You Gods, whose anger made vs great, grant yet



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Some change in misery ; We begge not now,  
To haue our Consull tread on *Asian* Kings,  
Or spurne the quierd *Susa* at their feet ;  
This, we haue had before ; we begg to liue,  
At least not thus to die ; Let *Cannos* come,  
Let *Allius* waters turne againe to blood.  
To these will any miseries be light.

*Petro*: Why with false *Auguries* haue we bin deceiu'd ?  
Why was our Empire told vs, should endure  
With Sunne, and Moone, in time ; in brightnesse passe them,  
And that our end should be oth' world, and it.  
What, can Celestiall Godheads double too ?

*Senec*: O *Rome*, the enuy late,  
But now, the pitie of the world thee gets,  
The men of *Cholcos* at thy sufferings griue,  
The shaggy dweller in the *Scithian* Rockes ;  
The most condemned to perpetuall snowe  
That neuer wept at kindreds burials,  
Suffers with thee, and feeles his heart to soften.  
O, should the *Parthyan* heare these miseries,  
He would, (his low and natiue hate apart)  
Sit downe with vs, and lend an Enemies teare,  
To grace the funerall fires of ending *Rome*.

*Exeunt.*

*Soft Musique, Enter Nero aboue alone with  
a Timbrell.*

I, now my *Troy* lookes beautious in her flames,  
The *Tyrrhene* Seas are bright with *Roman* fires,  
Whilest the amazed Marriner a farre,  
Gazing on th' vnkowne light, wonders what starre  
Heauen hath begot, to ease the aged Moone.  
When *Pirrhus*, stryding ore the cynders, stood  
On ground, where *Troy* late was ; and with his Eye  
Measur'd the height of what he had throwne downe,  
A Citie, great in people, and in power :  
Walls built with hands of Gods ; He now forgieue  
The ten yeares length, and thinkes his wounds well heald,  
Bath'd in the blood of *Priams* fifty sonnes.  
Yet am not I appeas'd, I must see more.

Then



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Then Towers, and Collomns tumble to the ground ;  
'Twas not the high built walles, and guiltlesse stones  
That *Nero* did prouoke ; Themselues must be the wood  
To feed this fire, or quench it with their blood.

*Enter a Woman with a burnt Child.*

*Wom:* O my deare Infant, O my Child, my Child ;  
Vnhappy comfort of my nine moneths paines ;  
And did I beare thee, onely for the fire,  
Was I to that end made a Mother ?

*Nero:* I, now begins the sceane that I would haue.

*Enter a Man bearing another dead.*

*Man:* O Father speake yet ; no, the mercilesse blowe  
Hath all bereft, speech, motion, sense, and life.

*Wom:* O beauteous innocence, whitenes ill blackt,  
How to be made a coale couldst thou deserue ?

*Man:* O reuerend wrinckles, well becomming palenesse,  
Why hath death now lifes colours giuen thee,  
And mockes thee with the beauties of fresh youth ?

*Wom:* Why wert thou giuen me, to be tane away  
So soone, or could not Heauen tell how to punish  
But first by blessing mee.

*Man:* Why were thy yeares lengthned so long,  
To be cut off vntimely ?

*Nero:* Play on, play on, and fill the golden skies  
With cries, and pitie ; with your blood ; Mens Eyes.

*Wom:* Where are thy flattering smiles, thy pretty kisses,  
And armes, that wont to writhe about my necke ?

*Man:* Where are thy Counsels, where they good example ?  
And that kind roughnes of a Fathers anger ?

*Wom:* Whom haue I now to leane my old age on ?

*Man:* Who shall I now haue to set right my youth, *within.*  
Gods if yee be not fled from Heauen helpe vs.

*Nero:* I like this Musique well ; they like not mine :  
Now in the teare of all men, let me sing, *Cantar.*  
And make it doubtfull to the Gods aboue ;  
Whether the Earth be pleas'd, or doe complaine.

*Man:* But, may the man, that all this blood hath shed,  
Neuer bequeath to th'earth, an old gray head ;



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Let him vntimely be cut off before,  
And leaue a course like this all wounds and gore.  
Be there no friend at hand, no flanders by,  
In loue, or pittie mou'd, to close that Eye.  
O let him die the wish, and hate of all;  
And not a teare to grace his Funerall.

*exennt.*

*Wom:* Heauen, you will heare (that which the world doth  
The prayers of misery, and soules forlorne : *scorne,*)  
Your anger waxeth by delaying stronger,  
O now for mercy be dispis'd no longer.  
Let him, that makes so many Mothers childlesse,  
Make his vnhappy, in her fruitfulnessse.  
Let him no issue leaue to beare his name  
Or some to right a Fathers wronged fame,  
Our flames to quit ; be righteous in your yre,  
And when he dies, let him want funerall fire.

*exennt.*

*Nero:* Let Heauen doe what it will, this I haue done  
Already : doe you feele my furies waight,  
*Rome* is become a graue of her late greatnes;  
Her clowdes of smoke haue tane away the day,  
Her flames the night.  
Now vnbeleeuing Eyes what craue you more ?

*Enter Neophilus to him.*

*Neoph:* O saue your selfe (my Lord) your Pallace burnes.

*Nero:* My Pallace ? how ? what traiterous hand ?

*Enter Tigellinus to them.*

*Tigel:* O flie my Lord, and saue your selfe betimes,  
The winde doth beate the fire vpon your house,  
The eating flame deuoures your double gates,  
Your pillars fall, your golden roofes doe melt,  
Your antique Tables, and Greeke Imagery :  
The fire besets, and the smoake you see  
Doth choake my speech, O flie, and saue your life.

*Nero:* Heauen, thou dost strive, I see, for victory. *exennt.*

*Enter Nimphidens solus.*

See how Fate workes vnto their purpos'd end ;  
And without all selfe-Industry will raise,  
Whom they determine to make great and happy ;

*Nero:*



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Nero* throwes downe himselfe, I stirre him not,  
He runnes vnto destruction, studies wayes  
To compasse danger, and attaine the hate  
Of all; Bee his owne wish is on his head:  
Nor *Rome* with fire, more then reuenges burne;  
Let me stand still, or lye, or sleepe, I rise.  
*Poppea* some new fauour will seeke out  
My wakings to salute, I cannot stirre,  
But messagers of new preferment meet me:  
Now, she hath made me Captaine of the Guard,  
So well I beare me in these night Allarmes,  
That she imagin'd I was made for Armes;  
I now command the Souldier, he the Citie,  
If any chance doe turne the Prince aside,  
(As many hatreds, mischiefes threaten him,)  
Ours is his wife, his seat and throwne is ours.  
He's next in right that hath the strongest powers.

*exit*

*Enter Scenius, Melechus.*

*Sceni:* O *Troy*, and O yee soules of our Forefathers,  
Which in your countreys fires were offred vp,  
How neere your Nephewes, to your fortunes come:  
Yet they were *Grecian* hands began your flame;  
But that our Temples, and our houses smoake,  
Our Marble buildings turne to be our Tombes,  
Burnt bones and spurnt at Courses fill the streets,  
Not *Pirrhus*, nor thou *Hanniball*, art Author,  
Sad *Rome* is ru'n'd by a *Romane* hand.  
But if to *Neroes* end, this onely way  
Heauens Iustice hath chose out, and peoples loue  
Could not but by this feebling ill be mou'd;  
We doe not then at all complaine our harmes,  
On this condition please vs, let vs die,  
And cloy the *Parthian*, with reuenge and pitie.

*Melic:* My Master hath seald vp his Testament,  
Those bond-men which he liketh best set free,  
Giuen money, and more liberally then he vs'd:  
And now, as if a farewell to the world  
Were meant, A sumptuous banquet hath he made;

*Yet*



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Yet not with countenance that feasters vse,  
But cheeres his friends the whilest himselfe lookes sad.

*Scen:* I haue from fortunes Temple tane this sword,  
May it be fortunate, and now at least  
Since it could not preuent, punish the Euill ;  
To *Rome* it had bin better done before,  
But though lesse helping now, they'le praise it more.  
Great Soueraigne of all mortall actions  
Whom onely wretched men, and Poets blame,  
Speed thou the weapon, which I haue from thee ;  
'Twas not amidst thy Temple Monuments  
In vaine repos'd, somewhat I know 't hath done :  
O with new honours let it be laid vp :  
Strike bouldly, arme so many powerfull prayers  
Of dead, and liuing houer ouer thee.

*Melic:* And though sometimes, with talke impertinent,  
And idle fancies, he would faine a mirth ;  
Yet is it easie seene, somewhat is here  
The which, he dares not let his face make shew of.

*Scenin:* Long want of losse hath made it dull, and blunt :  
See, *Melichus*, this weapon better edg'd.

*Melic:* Sharpning of swords, when must wee then haue  
Or meanes my Master, *Cato*-like, to exempt (blowes,  
Himselfe from power of Fates, and cloy'd with life,  
Giue the Gods backe their vnregarded gift,  
But he hath neither *Catoes* minde, nor cause ;  
A man giuen ore to pleasures, and soft ease :  
Which makes me still to doubt, how in affaires  
Of Princes he dares meddle, or desires ?

*Scenin:* We shall haue blowes on both sides, *Melichus* ;  
Prouide me store of cloathes to bind vp wounds ;  
What an't be heart, for heart, Death is the worst ;  
The Gods sure keepe it, hide from vs that liue  
How sweet death is, because we should goe on  
And be their bailes : There are about the house  
So ne stones that will stanch blood, see them set vp :  
This world I see hath no felicitie,  
He trie the other.

*Melic:*



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Melic:* *Neroes* life is soft,  
The sword's prepar'd against anothers breast,  
The helpe for his ; it can be no priuate foe,  
For then 'twere best to make it knowne, and call  
His troupes of bond, and freed men to his aide :  
Besides his Counsellors, *Seneca*,  
And *Lucan*, are no Managers of quarrels.

*Scenin:* Me thinkes, I see him struggling on the ground,  
Heare his vnmanly outcries, and lost prayers  
Made to the Gods, which turne their heads away.

*Nero*, this day must end the worlds desires,  
And head-long send thee, to vnquenched fires. *exit.*

*Melic:* Why doe I further idly stand debating,  
My proofes are but too many, and too pregnant,  
And Princes Eares still to suspitions open :  
Who euer, being but accus'd, was quit ;  
For States are wise, and cut of ylls that may be ;  
Meane men must die, that t'other may sleepe sound,  
Chiefely, that rule, whose weaknes apt to feares,  
And bad deserts of all men, makes them know  
There's none but is in heart, what hee's accus'd. *exit.*

*Finis Actus Tertij.*

*Actus Quartus.*

*Enter Nero, Poppea, Nimphidius, Tigellinus,  
Neophitus, and Epaphroditus.*

*Nero:* **T**HIS kisse sweet loue, Ile force from thee, and this,  
And of such spoiles, and victories be prowder,  
Then if I had the fierce *Panonian*,  
Or gray-eyd *German* ten times ouercome.  
Let *Iulius* goe, and fight at end oth' world,  
And conquer from the wilde inhabitants  
Their cold, and pouerty ; whilest *Nero*, here,  
Makes other warres, warres where the conquerd gaines,



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Where to ore-come, is to be prisoner.  
O willingly, I giue my freedome vp;  
And put on my owne chaines;  
And am in loue with my captiuitie;  
Such *Venus* is, when on the sandy shore  
Of *Xanthus* or on *Idas* pleasant Greene  
She leades the dance; Her, the *Nymphes* all are we,  
And smyling graces doe accompany.  
If *Bacchus* could his stragling Mynion  
Grace, with a glorious wreath of shining Starres;  
Why should not Heauen my *Poppæa* Crowne?  
The Northerne teeme shall moue into a round;  
New constellations rise, to honour thee;  
The Earth shall wooe thy fauours, and the Sea  
Lay his rich shells, and treasure at thy feete.  
For thee, *Hidaspis* shall throw vp his gold,  
*Pauchaia* breath the rich delightfull smells,  
The *Seres*, and the feather'd man of *Inde*  
Shall their fine arts, and curious labours bring:  
And where the Sunn's not knowne, *Poppæas* name  
Shall midst their feasts, and barbarous pompe be sung.

*Poppæa*: I, now I am worthy to be Queene oth' world,  
Fairer then *Venus*, or the *Bacchus* loue:  
But you'le anone, vnto your cutt-boy, *Sporus*,  
Your new made woman; to whom, now I heare  
You are wedded too.

*Nero*: I wedded?

*Poppæa*: I, you wedded;  
Did you not heare the words oth' *Auspices*,  
Was not the boy in bride-like garments drest,  
Marriage bookes seald, as 'twere for yssue, to  
Be had betweene you, solemne feasts prepar'd;  
While all the Court, with *God-giue you Ioy*, sounds.  
It had bin good *Domitius* your Father  
Had nere had other wife.

*Nero*: Your froward foole, y'are still so bitter, whose that?

*Enter Melichus to them.*

*Nymph*: One that it seemes, my Lord, doth come in hast.

*Nero*:



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Nero:* Yet in his face he sends his tale before him,  
Bad newes thou tellest.

*Melic:* 'Tis bad I tell, but good that I can tell it,  
Therefore your Maiestie will pardon me,  
If I offend your eares to saue your life.

*Nero:* Why, is my life indangerd?  
How ends this circumstance, thou wrackst my thoughts.

*Meli:* My Lord your life is conspir'd against,

*Nero:* By whom?

*Meli:* I must be of the world excus'd in this,  
If the great dutie to your Maiestie:  
Makes me all other lesse to neglect.

*Nero:* Th'art a tedious fellow, speake, by whom?

*Melic:* By my Master.

*Nero:* Who's thy Master?

*Meli:* *Sceninus.*

*Poppa:* *Sceninus*, why should he conspire?  
Vnlesse he thinke, that likenesse in conditions  
May make him too, worthy oth' Empire thought.

*Nero:* Who are else in it?  
I thinke *Natalis*, *Subius*, *Flauius*,  
*Lucan*, *Seneca*, and *Lucius Piso*,  
*Asper*, and *Quintilianus*.

*Nero:* Ha done,  
Thou'lt reckon all *Rome* anone, and so thou maist,  
Th'are villaines all, Ile not trust one of them;  
O that the *Romanes* had but all one necke.

*Poppa:* *Pisoes* lye creeping into mens affections,  
And popular arts, haue giuen long cause of doubt,  
And th'others late obseru'd discontents  
Risen from misinterpreted disgraces,  
May make vs credit this relation.

*Nero:* Where are they? come they not vpon vs yet?  
See the Guard doubled, see the Gates shut vp,  
Why, the'yle surprise vs in our Court anon.

*Meli:* Not so my Lord, they are at *Pisoes* house,  
And thinke themselves, yet safe, and vndiscry'd.

*Nero:* Lets thither then,



## The Tragedie of Nero.

And take them in this false security ;

*Tigel:* 'Twere better first publish them traytors.

*Nymph:* That were to make them so,  
And force them all vpon their Enemies ;  
Now, without stirre, or hazard they le be tane,  
And boldly try all dare, and law demaund ;  
Besides, this accusation may be forg'd  
By mallice or mistaking.

*Poppe:* What likes you, doe *Nymphidius*, out of hand,  
Two wayes distract, when either would preuaile ;  
If they suspecting but this fellowes absence,  
Should try the Citie, and attempt their friends,  
How dangerous might *Piso's* fauour be.

*Nymph:* I to himselfe would make the matter cleare,  
Which now vpon one seruants credit stands :  
The Cities fauour keepes within the bonds,  
Of profit, they le loue none, to hurt themselues ;  
Honour, and friendship they heare others name,  
Themselves doe neither feele, nor know the same ;  
To put them yet, (though needlesse) in some feare,  
Weele keepe their streets with armed companies :  
Then if they stirre, they see their wiues, and houses  
Prepar'd a pray to th' greedy Souldier.

*Poppe:* Let vs be quicke then, you, to *Piso's* house,  
While I, and *Tigellinus* further sift  
This fellowes knowledge.

*Ex. omnes Prætor Nero.*

*Nero:* Looke to the gates, and walles of th' Citie, looke  
The river be well kept, haue watches set  
In euery passage, and in euery way ;  
But who shall watch these watches, what if they  
Begin, and play the Traytors first? O where shall I  
Seeke faith, or them that I may wisely trust?  
The Citie fauours the conspirators,  
The Senate, in disgrace, and feare hath lin'd ;  
The Campe, why most are souldiers that he named,  
Besides, he knowes not all ; and like a foole  
I interrupted him, else had he named  
Those that stood by me ; O securitie,

Which



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Which we so much seeke after, yet art still  
To Courts a stranger, and dost rather choose,  
The smoaky reedes, and sedgy cottages,  
Then the proud rooves, and wanton cost of Kings.  
O sweet dispised ioyes of pouerty,  
A happines vnkowne vnto the Gods:  
Would I had rather in poore Gallij bin,  
Or *Vlubra*, a ragged Magistrate,  
Sat as a Iudge of measures, and of corne,  
Then the adored Monarke of the world.  
Mother, thou didst deseruedly in this,  
That from a priuate, and sure state, didst raise  
My fortunes, to this slippery hill of greatnesse;  
Where I can neither stand, nor fall with life.

*Exit.*

*Enter Piso, Lucan, Sceninus, Flavius.*

*Flau:* But since we are discouer'd, what remaines?  
But put our liues vpon our hndes, these swords  
Shall try vs Traitors, or true Citizens.

*Sceni:* And what should make this hazard doubt successe,  
Stout men are oft with sudden onsets danted,  
What shall this Stage-player be?

*Luc:* It is not now,  
*Augustus* grauitie, nor *Tiberius* craft,  
But *Tigellinus*, and *Crisogorus*  
Eunuckes, and women that we goe against.

*Sceni:* This for thy owne sake, this for ours we begg,  
That thou wilt suffer him to be overcome;  
Why shouldst thou keepe so many vowed swords  
From such a hated throate?

*Flau:* Or shall we feare,  
To trust vnto the Gods so good a cause.

*Luca:* By this we may, our selues Heauens fauour promise,  
Because all noblenesse, and worth on earth  
We see's on our side; Here the *Faby's* sonne,  
Here the *Cornini* are, and take that part;  
There noble Fathers would, if now they liu'd;  
There's not a soule that claimes Nobilitie  
Either by his, or his fore-fathers merit,



## The Tragedie of Nero.

But is with vs ; with vs the gallant youth  
Whom passed dangers, or hote bloud makes bould :  
Staid men suspect their wisedome, or their faith,  
To whom our counsels we haue not reueald.  
And while (our party seeking to disgrace)  
They traitors call vs, Each man treason praiseth,  
And hateth faith, when *Piso* is a traitor.

*Sceni*: And at aduenture ? what by stoutnesse can  
Befall vs worse, then will by cowardise ?

If both the people, and the souldier failde vs,  
Yet shall we die at least worthy our selues,  
Worthy our ancestors : O *Piso* thinke,  
Thinke on that day, when in the *Parthian* fields  
Thou cryedst to th' flying Legions to turne,  
And looke Death in the face ; he was not grim,  
But faire and louely, when he came in armes.

O why, there di'd we not on *Syrian* swords ?

Were we refer'd to prisons, and to chaines.

Behold the Galley-asses in euery street,

And euen now they come to clap on yrons ;

Must *Piso's* head be shewed vpon a pole ?

Those members torne ; rather then *Roman*-like,

And *Piso*-like, with weapons in our hands

Fighting, in throng of enemies to die :

And that it shall not be a ciuill warre

*Nero* preuents, whose cruelty hath left

Few Citizens ; we are not Romans now,

But Moores, and lewes, and vtmost Spaniards,

And *Asiaes* refuge that doe fill the Citie.

*Piso*: Part of vs are already tak'n, the rest

Amaz'd, and seeking holes ; Our hidden ends

You see laid open, Court, and Citie arm'd,

And for feare ioyning to the part they feare.

Why should we moue desperate, and hopelesse armes

And vainely spill that noble bloud, that should

Christall *Rubes*, and the *Median* fields,

Not *Tiber* colour : And the more your show be

Your loues, and readinesse to loose your liues,



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

The lother I am to aduenture them.

Yet am I proud, you would for me haue dy'd,  
But liue, and keepe your selues to worthier ends;  
No Mother but my owne shall weepe my death,  
Not will I make by ouerthrowing vs,  
Heauen guiltie of more faults, yet from the hopes,  
Your owne good wishes, rather then the thing  
Doe make you see, this comfort I receiue  
Of death vnforst. O friends, I would not die  
When I can liue no longer; 'Tis my glory,  
That free, and willing I giue vp this breath,  
Leauing such courages as yours vntrid.  
But to belong in talke of dying, would  
Shew a relenting, and a doubtfull mind:  
By this you shall my quiet thoughts intend;  
I blame nor Earth, nor Heauen for my end.

*He dies.*

*Lucan:* O that this noble courage had bin shewne,  
Rather on enemies breasts, then on thy owne.

*Sceni:* But sacred, and inviolate be thy will,  
And let it lead, and teach vs;  
This sword I could more willingly haue thrust  
Through *Neroes* breast; That, fortune deni'd me,  
It now shall through *Sceninus*.

*Enter Tigellinus solus.*

What multitudes of villaines are here gotten  
In a conspiracy; which *Hydra* like,  
Still in the cutting off, increaseth more.  
The more we take, the more are still appeach,  
And euery man brings in new company.  
I wonder what we shall doe with them all,  
The prisons cannot hold more then they haue,  
The layles are full, the holes with Gallants stincke,  
Strawe and gold lace together liue I thinke:  
'Fwere best euen shut the gates oth' Citie vp,  
And make it all one layle; for, this I am sure,  
There's not an honest man within the walles:  
And though the guilty doth exceed the free;  
Yet through a base, and fatall cowardise,

*They*



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

They all assise, in taking one another,  
And by their owne hands are to prison led.  
There's no condition, nor degree of men,  
But here are met; Men of the sword, and gowne,  
*Plebeians, Senators*, and women too,  
Ladies that might haue slaine him with their Eye,  
Would vse their hands, *Philosophers*,  
And *Politicians*; *Politicians*?  
Their plot was laid too short; Poets would now,  
Not onely write, but be the arguments  
Of Tragedies: The Emperour's much pleas'd:  
But some haue named *Seneca*, and I  
Will haue *Petronius*, one promise of pardon,  
Or feare of torture, will accusers find. *exit.*

*Enter Nimphidius, Lucan, Sceunus, with a guard.*

*Nymph:* Though *Piso*'s suddenesse, and guilty hand  
Preuented hath the death he should haue had;  
Yet you abide it must.

*Luca:* O may the earth lye lightly on his Course,  
Sprinkle his ashes with your flowers and teares,  
The loue and dainties of Mankind is gone.

*Sceun:* What onely now we can, we'le follow thee  
That way thou lead'st, and waite on thee in death,  
Which we had done, had not these hindred vs.

*Nymph:* Nay, other ends your grieuous crimes awaite,  
Ends which the law and your deserts exact.

*Sceun:* What haue we deserued?

*Nymph:* That punishment that traitors vnto Princes,  
And enemies to the State they liue in merit.

*Sceun:* If by the State, this gouernment you meane,  
I iustly am an enemy vnto it.

That's but to *Nero*, you, and *Tigellinus*:

That glorious world, that euen beguiles the wise,  
Being lookt into, includes but three, or foure.

Corrupted men, which were they all remou'd,  
'Twould for the common State much better be.

*Nymph:*



## The Tragedie of Nero.

*Nymph:* Why, what can you ith' gouernment mislike ?  
Vnlesse it griene you, that the world's in peace,  
Or that our armes conquer without blood.  
Hath not his power with forraine visitations,  
And strangers honour more acknowldg'd bin,  
Then any was afore him ? Hath not hee  
Dispos'd of frontier kingdomes, with successe,  
Giuen away Crownes, whom he set vp, preuailing ?  
The riual seat of the *Assacide*,  
That thought their brightnesse equall vnto ours,  
Is't crown'd by him, by him doth raigne ?  
If we haue any warre, it's beyond *Rheme*,  
And *Euphrates*, and such whose different chances  
Haue rather seru'd for pleasure, and discourse,  
Then troubled vs ; At home the Citie hath  
Increast in wealth, with building bin adorn'd ;  
The arts haue flourish't, and the Muses sung,  
And that, his Iustice, and well tempred raigne,  
Hath the best Iudges pleas'd, the powers diuine ;  
Their blessings, and so long prosperitie  
Of th' Empire vnder him, enough declare.

*Sceni:* You freed the State from warres abroad, but twas  
To spoile at home more safely, and diuert  
The *Parthian* enmitie on vs, and yet,  
The glory rather, and the spoyles of warre  
Haue wanting bin, the losse, and charge we haue.  
Your peace is full of cruelty, and wrong,  
Lawest taught to speake to present purposes,  
Wealth, and faire houses dangerous faults become,  
Much blood ith' Citie, and no common deaths,  
But Gentlemen, and Consulary houses :  
On *Casars* owne house looke, hath that bin free ?  
Hath he not shed the blood he calls diuine ?  
Hath not that neerenes which should loue beget  
Alwayes on him, bin cause of hate, and feare ;  
Vertue, and power suspected, and kept downe :  
They whose great ancestors this Empire made,



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Distrusted in the gouernment thereof ;  
A happy state, where *Decius* is a traytor,  
*Narcissus* true, nor onely wast vn safe  
T'offend the Prince, his freed men worse were feard,  
whose wrongs with such insulting pride were heard,  
That euen the faultie it made innocent :  
If we complain'd, that was it selfe a crime,  
I, though it were to *Cæsars* benefit ;  
Our writings pry'd into, false guiltines  
(Thinking each taxing pointed out it selfe)  
Our priuate whisperings listned after ; nay,  
Our thoughts were forced out of vs, and punisht :  
And had it bin in you, to haue taken away  
Our vnderstanding, as you did our speech,  
You would haue made vs thought this honest too ?

*Nymph*: Can malice narrow eyes,  
See any thing yet more it can traduce.

*Sceni*: His long continued taxes I forbear,  
In which he chiefly showed him to be Prince,  
His robbing Alters, sale of Holy things,  
The Antique Goblets of adored rust,  
And sacred gifts of Kings, and people sold.  
Nor was the spoile more odious, then the vse,  
They were imployd on, spent on shame, and lust  
Which still haue bin so endlesse in their change,  
And made vs know a diuers seruitude.  
But that he hath bin suffered so long,  
And prospered, as you say : for that, to thee  
O Heauen, I turne my selfe, and cry ; No God  
Hath care of vs, yet haue we our reuenge,  
As much as Earth may be reueng'd on Heauen ;  
Their diuine honour *Nero* shall vsurpe,  
And prayers, and feasts, and adoration haue,  
As well as *Iupiter*.

*Nymph*: Away blaspheming tongue  
Be euer silent for thy bitternesse,

*Exeunt.*

*Enter*



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Nero, Poppae, Tigellinus, Flavius, Neophilus,  
Epaphroditus, and a young man.*

*Nero:* What could cause thee,  
Forgetfull of my benefits, and thy oath,  
To seeke my life.

*Plani:* *Nero*, I hated thee;  
Nor was there any of thy souldiers  
More faithfull, while thou faith deseru'dst then I,  
Together did I leaue to be a subiect,  
And thou a Prince, Caesar was now become  
A player on the Stage, a Waggoner,  
A burner of our houses, and of vs,  
A Paracide of Wife, and Mother.

*Tigell:* Villaine dost know where, & of whom thou speakest?

*Nero:* Haue you but one death for him, let it bee  
A feeling one (*Tigellinus*) bee't  
Thy charge, and let me see thee witty in't.

*Tigell:* Come firrah  
Weele see how stoutly you'll stretch out your necke.

*Flavi:* Wold thou durst strike as stoutly, *Ex. Tig. & Flavi:*

*Nero:* And what's hee there?

*Epaph:* One that in whispering oreheard  
What pitie 'twas, my Lord, that *Piso* died.

*Nero:* And why wast pitie firrah, *Piso* died?

*Yong:* My Lord 'twas pitie he deseru'd to die.

*Poppae:* How much this youth, my *Otho* doth resemble;  
*Otho*, my first, my best loue, who is now  
(Vnder pretext of gouerning) exyl'd  
To *Lucitania*, honourably banisht.

*Nero:* Well, if you be so passionate,  
Ile make you spend your pitie on your Prince,  
And good men, not on traytors.

*Yong:* The Gods forbid my Prince should pitie need.  
Somewhat, the sad remembrance did me stirre



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Oth fraile and weake condition of our kind,  
Somewhat his greatnesse ; then whom yesterday,  
The world, but *Cesar*, could shew nothing higher ;  
Besides, some vertues, and some worth he had,  
That might excuse my pitie, to an end  
So cruell, and vnripe.

*Poppa*: I know not how this stranger moues my mind,  
His face me thinkes is not like other mens,  
Nor doe they speake thus ; Oh, his words inuade  
My weakned senses, and ouercome my heart.

*Nero*: Your pitie shewes, your fauour and your will  
Which side you are inclinde too, had your power,  
You can but pitie, else should *Cesar* feare,  
Your ill affection then shall punisht bee.  
Take him to execution, he shall die,  
That the death pities of mine enemye.

*Yong*: This benefit at least.  
Sad death shall giue, to free me from the power  
Of such a gouernment ; and if I die  
For pitying humane chance, and *Pisces* end,  
There will be some too, that will pitie mine.

*Poppa*: O what a dauntlesse looke, what sparkling eyes, ]  
Threating in suffering ; sure some noble blood  
Is hid in ragges, feares argues a base spirit  
In him what courage, and contempt of death,  
And shall I suffer one I loue to die ?

He shall not die ? hands of this man, away,  
*Nero*, thou shalt not kill this guiltlesse man.

*Nero*: He guiltlesse, strumpet. *Spurns her and*  
She's in loue with the smooth face of the boy. *Poppa falls.*

*Neoph*. Alas my Lord you haue slaine her.

*Epaph*: Helpe she dies.

*Nero*: *Poppa*, *Poppa*, speake, I am not angry,  
I did not meane to hurt thee, speake sweet loue.

*Neoph*: Shee's dead my Lord.

*Nero*: Fetch her againe, she shall not die,  
He ope the Iron gates of hell,

And



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

And breake the imprisond shaddowes of the deepe,  
And force from death this farre too worthy pray,  
Shee is not dead.

The crimson red, that like the morning shone,  
When from her windowes, (all with Roses strewde,)  
She peepeth forth, forsakes not yet her cheekes,  
Her breath, that like a hony-suckle smelt  
twining about the prickled Eglintine,  
Yet moues her lips; those quicke, and piercing eyes,  
That did in beautie challenge heauens eyes  
Yet shine as they were wont : O no they doe not,  
See how they grow obscure : O see, they close,  
And cease to take, or giue light to the world.  
What starres so ere you are assur'd to grace  
The firmament, (for loe the twinkling fires  
Together throng, and that cleare milky space  
Of stormes, and *Phiades*, and thunder void,  
Prepares your roome,) doe not with wry aspect  
Looke on your *Nero*, who in blood shall mourne  
Your lucklesse fate ; And many a breathing soule,  
Send after you to waite, vpon their *Queene* ;  
This shall begin, the rest shall follow after,  
And fill the streets with outcries, and with slaughter. *Ex.*

*Enter Seneca, with two of his friends.*

*Senec*: What meanes your mourning, this vngratefull sorrow?  
Where are your precepts of *Philosophie*?  
Where our prepared resolution,  
So many yeeres fore-studied against danger?  
To whom is *Neroes* cruelty vnknowne?  
Or what remained after mothers blood,  
But his instructers death? Leauē, leauē these teares,  
Death from me nothing takes, but what's a burthen,  
A clog, to that free sparke of Heauenly fire :  
But that in *Seneca*, the which you lou'd,  
Which you admir'd, doth, and shall still remaine  
Secure of death, vntouched of the graue.



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

1. *Friend.* Weele not belie our teares, we waile not thee,  
It is our selues, and our owne losse we grieue;  
To thee, what losse in such a change can bee,  
Vertue is paid her due, by death alone;  
To our owne losses doe we giue these teares,  
That loose thy loue, thy boundlesse knowledge loose,  
Loose the vnpattern'd sample of thy vertue,  
Loose whatsoeuer may praise, or sorrow moue;  
In all these losses, yet of this we glory,  
That 'tis thy happinesse that makes vs sorry.

2. *Friend.* If there be any place for Ghosts of good men,  
If (as we haue bin long taught) great mens soules  
Consume not with their bodies, thou shalt see,  
(Looking from out the dwellings of the ayre)  
True duties to thy memorie perform'd;  
Not in the outward pompe of funerall,  
But in remembrance of thy deeds, and words,  
The oft recalling of thy many vertues,  
The Tombe, that shall th'eternall relickes keepe  
Of *Seneca*, shall be his hearers hearts.

*Senec:* Be not afraid my soule, goe cheerefully,  
To thy owne Heauen, from whence it first let downe,  
Thou loath by this imprisoning flesh putt on,  
Now lifted vp, thou ravisht shalt behold  
The truth of things, at which we wonder here,  
And foolishly doe wrangle on beneath;  
And like a God shalt walke the spacious ayre,  
And see what euen to conceit's deni'd.  
Great soule oth' world, that through the parts defus'd  
Of this vast All, guid'st what thou dost informe;  
You blessed mindes, that from the *Pheares* you moue,  
Looke on mens actions not with idle eyes;  
And Gods we goe to, Aaid me in this strife,  
And combat of my flesh, that ending, I  
May still shew *Seneca*, and my selfe die.

*Exeunt.*



# *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Enter Antonius, Enanthe.*

*Anto:* Sure this message of the Princes,  
So grievous and vnlookt for, will appall  
*Petronius* much.

*Enan:* Will not death any man ?

*Anto:* It will ; but him so much the more ,  
That hauing liu'd to his pleasure ; shall forgoe  
So delicate a life, I doe not maruell  
That *Seneca*, and such sower fellowes, can  
Leaue that they neu'r tasted : But when we  
That haue the *Nectar* of thy kisses felt,  
That drinckes away the troubles of this life,  
And but one banquet make of forty yeeres,  
Must come to leaue this : but soft, here he is.

*Enter Petronius, and a Centurion.*

*Petron:* Leaue me a while, *Centurion* to my friends,  
Let me my farewell take, and thou shalt see,  
*Neroes* commandement quickly obaid in mee. *ex. Centurion.*  
Come let vs drinke, and dash the posts with wine  
Here throwe your flowers ; fill me a swelling bowle,  
Such as *Mecenas*, or my *Lucan* dranke  
On *Virgills* birth day.

*Enan:* What meanes (*Petronius*) this vnseasonable,  
And causelesse mirth ? Why, comes not from the Prince  
This man to you, a messenger of death,

*Petro:* Here faire *Enanthe*, whose plumpe ruddy cheek  
Exceeds the grape, it makes this ; here my geyrle. *He drinks.*  
And thinkst thou death, a matter of such harme,  
Why, he must haue this pretty dimpling chin,  
And will pecke out those eyes that now so wound.

*Enan:* Why, is it not th'extreamest of all ills ?

*Petro:* It is indeed the last, and end of ills ;  
The Gods, before th'would let vs tast deaths Ioyes,

Plac't



## The Tragedie of Nero.

Plac't vs ith royle, and sorrowes of this world,  
Because we should perceiue th'a nends, and thanke them,  
Death, the grim knaue, but leades you to the doore,  
Where entred once, all curious pleasures come  
To meete, and welcome you.

A troupe of beauteous Ladies from whose eyes,  
Loue, thousand arrowes, thousand graces shootes;  
Puts forth their faire hands to you, and inuites  
To their greene arbours, and close shadowed walles,  
Whence, banisht is the roughnesse of our yeeres:  
Onely the west wind blowes; Ith euer Spring,  
And euer Sommer: There the laden bowes  
Offer their tempting burdens to your hand,  
Doubtfull your eye, or tast inuiting more:  
There euery man his owne desires enioyes;  
Faire *Lucrese* lies, by lusty *Tarquins* side,  
And wooes him now againe to rauish her.  
Nor vs, (though *Romane*) *Lais* will refuse,  
To *Corinth* any man may goe; no maske,  
No enuious garment doth those beauties hide,  
Which *Nature* made, so mouing, to be spide,  
But in bright *Christall*, which doth supply all,  
And white transparent vailes they are attyr'd,  
Through which the pure snowe vnderneath doth shine;  
(Can it be snowe, from whence such flames arise?)  
Mingled with that faire company, shall we  
On bankes of *Violets*, and of *Hiacinths*  
Of loues deuising, sit, and gently sport,  
And all the while melodious Musique heare,  
And Poets songs, that Musique farre exceed  
The old *Anaicean* crown'd with smyling flowers,  
And amorous *Sapho*, on her Lesbian Lute  
Beauties sweet Scarres, and *Cupids* godhead sing,

*Anto*: What, be not rauisht with thy fancies, doe not  
Court nothing, nor make loue vnto our feares.

*Petro*: Ist nothing that I say?

*Anto*: But empty words.



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Petro:* Why, thou requir'st some instance of the eye,  
Wilt thou goe with me then, and see that world?  
Which either will returne thy old delights;  
Or square thy appetite anew to theirs.

*Anto:* Nay; I had rather farre beleue thee here,  
Others ambition such discoueries seeke;  
Faith, I am satisfied with the base delights  
Of common-men; A wench, a house I haue,  
And of my owne a garden, Ile not change,  
For all your walkes, and Ladies, and rare fruits.

*Petro:* Your pleasures must of force resigne to these,  
In vaine you shunne the sword, in vaine the sea,  
In vaine is *Nero* fear'd, or flattered;  
Hether you must, and leaue your purchast houses,  
Your new made garden, and your blacke browd wife,  
And of the trees thou hast so quaintly set;  
Not one, but the displeasent Cipresse shall  
Goe with thee.

*Anton:* Faith 'tis true, we must at length,  
But yet *Petronius*, while we may, awhile  
We would enioy them, those we haue, w'are sure of,  
When that you talke of's doubfull, and to come.

*Petro:* Perhaps thou thinkst to liue yet twenty yeeres,  
Which may vnlookt for be cut off, as mine,  
If not, to endlesse time compar'd, is nothing  
What you endure must euer, endure now;  
Nor stay not, to be last at table set,  
Each best day of our life at first doth goe,  
To them succeeds diseased age, and woe;  
Now die your pleasures, and the dayes your pray  
Your rimes, and loues, and iests will take away.  
Therefore my sweet, yet thou wilt goe with mee,  
And not liue here, to what thou wouldst not see.

*Enan:* Would y'haue me then kill my selfe, and die,  
And goe I know not to what places there.

*Petro:* What places dost thou feare?  
The'll fauoured lake they tell thee thou must passe.



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

And thy blacke frogs that croake about the brim.

*Enan:* O pardon Sir, though death affrights a woman;  
Whose pleasures, though you timely here diuine,  
The paines we know, and see,

*Petron:* The paine is lifes, death rids that paine away,  
Come boldly, there's no danger in this foord,  
Children passe through it: If it be a paine,  
You haue this comfort, that you past it are.

*Enan:* Yet all, as well as I, are loath to die.

*Petro:* Iudge them by deed, you see them doe't apace.

*Enan:* I, but tis loathly, and against their wils.

*Petro:* Yet, know you not that any being dead,  
Repented them, and would haue liu'd againe,  
They then there errors saw, and foolish prayers,  
But you are blinded in the loue of life,  
Death is but sweet to them that doe approach it  
To me as one that tak'n with *Delphick* rage,  
When the diuining God his breast doth fill,  
He sees what others cannot standing by,  
It seemes a beauteous, and a pleasant thing;  
Where is my deaths Phisitian?

*Phisi:* Here my Lord.

*Petro:* Art ready?

*Phisi:* I my Lord,

*Petro:* And I for thee:

*Nero,* my end shall mocke thy tyranny.

*Exeunt.*

### *Finis Actus Quarti.*

### *Actus Quintus.*

*Enter Nero, Nymphidius, Tigellinus, Neophilus,  
Epaphroditus, and other attendants.*

*Nero:* **E** Nough is wept, *Poppaa*, for thy death,  
Enough is bled, so many teares of others

*Wailing*



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Wailing their losses haue wipt mine away  
Who in the common funerall of the world  
Can mourne on death?

*Tigell:* Besides, your Maiestie this benefit  
In their deserued punishment shall reape  
From all attempts hereafter to be freed,  
Conspiracy is now for euer dathr,  
Tumult suppressd, rebellion out of heart;  
In *Piso*s death, danger it selfe did die.

*Nymph:* *Piso* that thought to climbe by bowing downe,  
By giuing a way to thriue, and raising others  
To become great himselfe, hath now by death  
Giuen quiet to your thoughts, and feare to theirs  
That shall from treason their aduancement plot;  
Those dangerous heads, that his ambition leand on,  
And they by it crept vp, and from their meannesse  
Thought in this stirre to rise aloft, are off:  
Now peace, and safetie waite vpon your throne;  
Securitie hath wall'd your seat about,  
There is no place for feare left.

*Nero:* Why, I neuer feard them.

*Nymph:* That was your fault.  
Your Maiestie must giue vs leaue to blame  
Your dangerous courage, and that noble soule  
Too prodigall of it selfe.

*Nero:* A Princes mind knowes neither feare, nor hope,  
The beames of royall Maiestie are such,  
As all eyes are with it amaz'd, and weakened,  
But it with nothing; I at first contemn'd  
Their weake deuises, and faint enterprise:  
Why, thought they against him to haue preuail'd,  
Whose childhood was from *Messalinas* spight  
By Dragons, (that the earth gaue vp) preseru'd,  
Such guard my cradle had; for fate had then  
Pointed me out, to be what now I am.  
Should all the Legions, and the prouinces  
In one vnited, against me conspire:



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

I could disperce them withone angry eye.  
My brow's an host of men; Come *Tigellinus*,  
Let turne this bloody banquet, *Piso* meant vs,  
Vnto a merry feast, weele drinke and challenge  
Fortune; whose that *Neophilus*?

*Enter a Roman.*

*Neoph*: A Currier from beyond the Alpes my Lord.

*Nero*: Newes of some German victorie belike,  
Or Britton ouerthrow.

*Neoph*: The Letters come from France.

*Nimp*: Why smiles your Maiestie?

*Nero*: So I smile, I should be afraid, there's one  
In Armes *Nimphidius*.

*Nimp*: What arm'd against your Maiestie?

*Nero*: Our Lieuetenant of the Prouince, *Iulius Vindex*.

*Tigell*: Who, that guiddy French-man?

*Nimp*: His Prouince is disarm'd my Lord, he hath  
No legion, not a souldier vnder him.

*Epaph*: One that by blood, and rapine would repaire  
His state consum'd in vanities, and lust.

*Enter another Roman.*

*Tigell*: He would not find out three to follow him.

*A mess*: More newes my Lord.

*Nero*: Is it of *Vindex* that thou hast to say?

*Mess*: *Vindex* is vp, and with him France in Armes.  
The Noble men, and people throng to th' cause,  
Money, and Armour, Cities doe conferre,  
The contrey doth send in prouision  
Yong men bring bodies, old men lead them forth,  
Ladies doe coine their Jewels into pay,  
The sickle now is fram'd into a sword,  
And drawing horses are to manage taught,  
France nothing dotk but warre, and fury breath.

*Nero*: All this fierce talk's, but *Vindex* doth rebell,  
And I will hang him.

*Tigell*. How long came you forth after the former messenger.

*Mess*: Foure dayes, but by the benefit of sea,

And



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

and weather, am arriued with him.

*Neoph.* How strong was *Vindex* at your coming forth?

*Mess.* He was esteem'd a hundred thousand.

*Tigell.* Men enough,

*Nymph.* And souldiours few enough.

Tumultuary troopes, vndisciplin'd,

Vntrain'd in seruice, to wast victuals good,

But when they come to looke on warres blacke wounds,

And but a farre off see the face of death.

*Nero.* It fallies out for my empty coffers well,

The spoyle of such a large and goodly Prouince,

Enricht with trade, and long enioyed peace.

*Tigell.* What order will your Maiestie haue taken  
For leuying forces to suppressle this stirre?

*Nero.* What order should we take? wee le laugh, & drinke,  
Thinkst thou it fit my pleasures be disturb'd

When any French-man list to breake his necke?

They haue not heard of *Piso's* Fortune yet,

Let that Tale fight with them.

*Nymph.* What order needs: your Maiestie shall finde  
This French heat quickly of it selfe grow cold.

*Nero.* Come away.

Nothing shall come that this nights sport shall stay.

*Ex. Nero.*

*Manet Neophilus, Epaphroditus.*

*Neoph.* I wonder what makes him so confident  
In this reuolt now growne vnto a warre,  
And ensignes in the field, when in the other,  
Being but a plot of a conspiracie,  
He shew'd himselfe so wretchedly dismaid,

*Epaph.* Faith, the right nature of a coward to set light  
Dangers that seeme farre off. *Piso* was here,  
Ready to enter at the Presence doore,  
And dragge him out of his abused chaire,  
And then he trembled; *Vindex* is in France,  
And many woods, and seas, and hills betweene.

*Neoph.* Twas strange that *Piso* was so soone suppress'd,



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Epaph:* Strange, strange indeed, for had he but come vp,  
And taken the Court, in that affright and stirre,  
While vnresolu'd for whom, or what to doe,  
Each on the other had in iealousie  
(While as apaled Maiestie not yet  
Had time to set the countenance) he would  
Haue hazarded the royall seat.

*Neoph:* Nay, had it without hazard; all the Court  
Had for him bin, and those disclos'd their loue,  
And fauour in the cause, which now to hide,  
And colour their good meanings ready were  
To shew their forwardnesse against it most.

*Epaph:* But for a stranger with a naked prouince,  
Without allies, or friends ith' state to challenge  
A Prince vpheld with thirty Legions  
Rooted in foure discents of Ancestors,  
And foureteene yeares continuance of raigne,  
Why it is ———

*Enter Nero, Nymphidius, Tigellinus to them. (ex. Ner. Nymph:*

*Nero:* *Galba* and *Spaine*, what *Spaine* and *Gala* too?

*Epaph:* I pray thee *Tigellinus*, what furie's this?  
What strange euent, what accident hath thus  
Orecast your countenances?

*Tigell.* Downe we were set at table, and began  
With sparckling bowles to chase our feares away,  
And mirth and pleasure lookt out of our eyes;  
When loe a breathlesse messenger comes in  
And tells how *Vindex*, and the powers of *France*  
Haue *Segius Galba* chosen Emperor,  
With what applause the Legions him receiue,  
That *Spaines* reuolted; *Portingale* hath ioyn'd;  
As much suspected is of *Germany*;  
But *Nero*, not abiding out the end,  
Orethrew the tables, dasht against the ground  
The cuppe which he so much you know esteem'd;  
Teareth his haire, and with incensed rage  
Curseth false men, and Gods the lookers on.

*Neoph:*



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

*Neoph:* His rage we saw was wild and desperate.

*Epaph:* O you vnsearched wisedomes, which doe laugh,  
At our securitie, and feares alike;

And plaine to shew our weakenesse, and your power

Make vs contemne the harmes, which surest strike

When you our glories, and our pride vndoe,

Our ouerthrow you make ridiculous too.

*exit.*

*Enter Nimphidius solus.*

Slow making counsels, and the sliding yeere

Haue brought me to the long foreseene destruction

Of this misled yong man; his State is shaken,

And I will push it on; reuolted France;

Nor the coniured Prouinces of Spaine,

Nor his owne guilt, shall like to me oppresse him;

I to his easie yeelding feares proclaime

New German mutenys, and all the world

Rowling it selfe in hate of *Neroes* name;

I his distracted counsels doe disperse

With fresh despaires, I animate the Senate

And the people, to ingage them past recall

In preiudice of *Nero*, and in brieft,

Perish he must, the fates and I resolute it;

Which to effect, I presently will goe,

Proclaime a *Donatius* in *Galbaes* name.

*Enter Antoneus to him.*

*Anton:* Yonders *Nimphidius* our Commander, now,  
I with respect must speake, and smoothe my brow;  
Captaine all haile.

*Nimp:* *Antoneus* well met,  
Your place of *Tribune* in this *Anarchi*.

*Anton:* This *Anarchy* my Lord, is *Nero* dead?

*Nimp:* This *Anarchy*, this yet vnstiled time,  
While *Galba* is vnseased of the Empire  
Which *Nero* hath forsooke.

*Anton:* Hath *Nero* then resign'd the Empire?

*Nimp:* In effect he hath, for he's fled to *Egypt*.

*Anton:* My Lord you tell strange newes to me.

*Nimph*



## The Tragedie of Nero.

*Nymph:* But nothing strange to mee,  
Who euery moment, knew of his despaires,  
The Curriers came so fast with fresh alarmes  
Of new reuolts, that he vnable quite  
To beare his feares, which he had long conceal'd,  
Is now reuoluted from himselfe, and fled.

*Anto:* Thrust with reports, and rumours from his seat.  
My Lord you know the Campe depends on you  
As you determine.

*Nymph:* There it lies *Antonius*,  
What should we doe, it boots not to relie  
On *Neroes* stinking fortunes, and to sit  
Securely looking on, were to receiue  
An Emperor from Spaine; which how disgracefull  
It were to vs, who if we waigh our selues  
The most materiall accessions are  
Of all the Roman Empire, which disgrace  
To couer we must ioyne our selues betimes,  
And thereby seeme to haue created *Gabba*;  
Therefore Ile straight proclaime a *Donatiue*,  
Of thirty thousand sisterces a man.

*Anto:* I thinke so great a gift was neuer heard of.  
*Galba* they say is frugally inclinde,  
Will he avow so great a gift as this?

*Nymph:* How ere he like of it, he must avow it,  
If by our promise he be once ingaged;  
And since the souldiers care belongs to mee,  
I will haue care of them, and of their good.  
Let them thanke me, if I through this occasion  
Procure for them so great a donatiue.

*Ex: Nimp:*

*Anton:* So you be thankd, it skills not who preuaile,  
*Galba*, or *Nero*, traitor to them both;  
You giue it out that *Neroes* fled to *Egypt*,  
Who with the frights of your repotts amaz'd,  
By our deuice, doth lurke for better newes,  
Whilst you ineuitably doe betray him,  
Workes he all this for *Galba* then? not so

I haue



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

I haue long seene his climbing to the Empire  
By secret practises of gracious women,  
And other instruments of the late Court,  
That was his loue to her that me refus'd;  
And now by this he would giue the souldiers fauour;  
Now is the time to quit *Poppeas* scorne,  
And his rivallity; Ile straight reuale  
His treacheries, to *Galbaes* agents here.

*Exit:*

*Enter Tigellinus with the Guard.*

*Tigell:* You see what issue things doe sort vnto,  
Yet may we hope not onely impunitie,  
But with our fellowes part oth' guist proclaim'd.

*Nero meets them.*

*Nero:* Whether goe you, stay my friends;  
'Tis *Cesar* calles you, stay my louing friends.

*Tigell:* We were his slaues, his footstooles, and must crouch;  
But now, with such obseruance to his feet,  
It is his misery that calles vs friends.

*Nero.* And moues you not the misery of a Prince?  
O stay my friends, stay, harken to the voyce  
Which once yee knew.

*Tigell:* Harken to the peoples cryes,  
Harke to the streets, that *Galba*, *Galba* ring.

*Nero:* The people may forsake me without blame,  
I did them wrong to make you rich, and great,  
I tooke their houses to bestow on you:  
Treason in them hath name of libertie,  
Your fault hath no excuse, you are my fault,  
And the excuse of others treachery.

*Tigell:* Shall we with staying seeme his tyrannies  
T' vphold, as if we were in loue with them?  
We are excus'd vnlesse we stay too long,  
As forced Ministers, and apart of wrong.

*ex. preter Nero.*

*Nero:* O now I see the vizard from my face  
So louely, and so fearefull is fall'n off  
That vizard, shadow, nothing (Maiestie)  
(Which like a child acquainted with his feares,



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

But now men trembled at, and now contemne)  
*Nero* forsaken is of all the world.  
The world of truth; O fall some vengeance downe  
Equall vnto their falsehoods, and my wrongs;  
Might I accept the Chariot of the Sunne,  
And like another *Phaeton* consume  
In flames of all the world; a pile of Death  
Worthy the state, and greatnesse I haue lost.  
Or were I now but Lord of my owne fires,  
Wherein false Rome yet once againe might smoake,  
And perish, all vnпитыed of her Gods,  
That all things in their last destruction might  
Performe a funerall honour to their Lord.  
O Ioue dissolue with *Cesar*, *Cesars* world;  
Or you whom *Nero* rather should inuoke  
Blacke *Chaos*, and you fearefull shapes beneath,  
That with a long, and not vaine enuy haue  
Sought to destroy this worke of th'other Gods;  
Now let your darkenesse cease the spoyles of day,  
And the worlds first contention end your strife.

*Enter two Romanes to him.*

*1 Rom:* Though others, bound with greater benefits  
Haue left your changed fortunes, and doe runne  
Whither new hopes doe call them, yet come we.

*Nero:* O welcome, come you to aduersitie,  
Welcome true friends, why there is faith on earth:  
Of thousand seruants, friends, and followers;  
Yet two are left: your countenance me thinkes  
Giues comfort, and new hopes

*2 Rom:* Doe not deceiue your thoughts,  
My Lord we bring no comfort, would we could;  
But the last duty to performe, and best  
We euer shall, a free death to perswade,  
To cut off hopes of fearcer cruelty,  
And scorne, more cruell to a worthy soule.

*1 Rom:* The Senate haue decreed you're punishable,  
After the fashion of our ancestors;

Which



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Which is ; your necke being locked in a forke  
You must be naked whipt, and scourg'd to death.

*Nero:* The Senate thus decreed? they that so oft  
My vertues flattered haue, and guifts of mine,  
My gouernment preferr'd to ancient times,  
And challenge *Numa* to compare with me;  
Haue they so horrible an end sought out?  
No, here I beare which shall preuent such shame.  
This hand shall yet from that deliuer me,  
And faithfull be alone vnto his Lord.

Alasse how sharpe, and terrible is death;  
O must I die, must now my senses close,  
For euer die, and nere returne againe,  
Neuer more see the Sunne, nor Heauen, nor Earth?  
Whither goe I? what shall I be anone;  
What horred iourney wandrest thou my soule,  
Vnder th'earth, in darke, dampe, duskie vaults?  
Or shall I now to nothing be resolu'd?  
My feares become my hopes, O would I might.  
Methinkes I see the boyling *Phlegeton*,  
And the dull poole, feared of them we feare,  
The dread, and terror of the Gods themselues,  
The furies arm'd with linkes, with whippes, with snakes,  
And my owne furies farre more mad then they;  
My mother, and those troopes of slaughterd friends,  
And now the Iudge is brought vnto the throne,  
That will not leaue vnto authoritie,  
Nor fauour the oppressions of the great

*1 Rom:* These are the idle terrors of the night,  
Which wise men (though they teach, doe not belceue)  
To curbe our pleasures faine, and aide the weake.

*2 Rom:* Deaths wrongfull defamation, which would make  
Vs shunne this happy hauen of our rest,  
This end of euils; as some fearefull harme.

*1 Rom.* Shadowes, and fond imaginations,  
Which now you see on earth; but children feare.

*2 Rom:* Why should our faults feare punishment from them,



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

What doe the actions of this life concerne  
The tother world, with which is no commerce?

1 *Rom:* Would Heauen, and Starres, necessitie compell  
Vs to doe that, which after it would punish?

2 *Rom:* Let vs not after our liues end belecue  
More then you felt before it.

*Nero:* If any words haue made me confident,  
And boldly doe, for hearing others speake,  
Boldly this night; But will you by example  
Teach me the truth of your opinion,  
And make me see that you beleue your selues,  
Will you by dying, teach me to beare death  
With courage?

1 *Rom:* No necessitie of death  
Hangs ore our heads, no dangers threatens vs,  
Nor Senates sharpe decree, nor *Galbaes* armes.

2 *Rom:* Is this the thanks then thou dost pay our loue?  
Die basely as such a life deseru'd;  
Referue thy selfe to punishment, and scorne  
Of Rome, and of thy laughing enemies.

*exit.*

*Manet Nero.*

*Nero:* They hate me, cause I would but liue, what was't  
You lou'd kind friends, and came to see my death;  
Let me endure all torture, and reproach  
That earth, or *Galbaes* anger can inflict;  
Yet hell, and *Rodamant* are more pittilesse.

*The first Romane to him.*

*Rom:* Though not deseru'd, yet once againe I come,  
To warne thee to take pitie on thy selfe;  
The troupes by the Senate sent, discend the hill  
And come.

*Nero:* To take me, and to whip me vnto death:  
O whither shall I flye?

*Rom:* Thou hast no choice.

*Nero:* O hither must I flye, hard is his happe,  
Who from death onely must by death escape,  
Where are they yet? O may I not a little

Be-



## *The Tragedie of Nero.*

Bethinke my selfe?

*Rom:* They are at hand; harke, thou maist heare the noise.

*Nero:* O *Rome* farewell, farewell you Theaters,  
Where I so oft, with popular applause  
In song; and action; O they come I die. *He falls on his sword.*

*Rom:* So base an end all iust commiseration  
Doth take away, yet what we doe now spurne,  
The morning Sunne saw fearefull to the world.

*Enter some of Galbaes friends, Antoneus and others,  
With Nymphidius bound.*

*Gal:* You both shall die together, Traitors both,  
He to the common wealth, and thou to him,  
And worse, to a good Prince; what, is he dead?  
Hath feare encourag'd him, and made him thus,  
Preuent our punishment; then die with him.  
Fall thy aspyring at thy Masters feete. *He kills Nymph:*

*Anton:* Who though he iustly perisht, yet by thee  
Deseru'd it not, nor ended there thy treason;  
But euen thought oth' Empire, thou conceia'st  
*Galbaes* disgrace in receiuing that  
Which the sonne of *Nymphidia* could hope.

*Rom:* Thus great bad men about them finde a rod:  
People depart, and say there is a God.

*Exeunt.*

*F F N F S.*



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